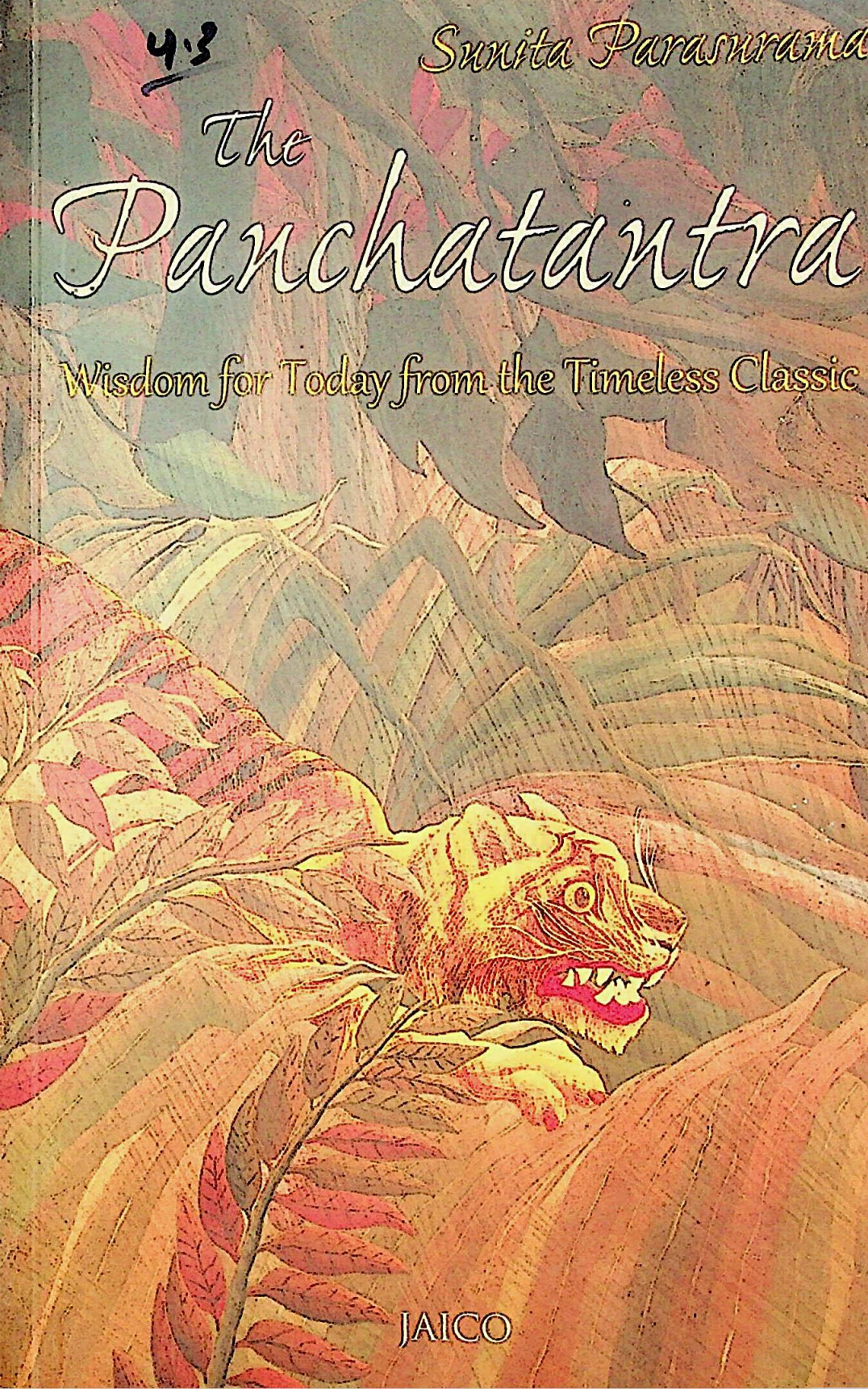
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The Panchatantra

Wisdom for Today from the Timeless Classic



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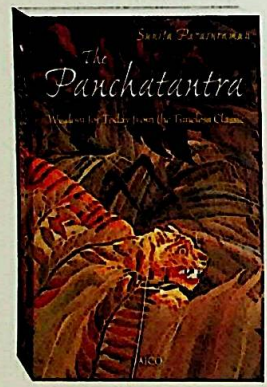
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SUNITA PARASURAMAN



The Panchatantra

The Panchatantra, one of the world's greatest collections of tales, was compiled in India by a learned Brahmin named Vishnusharman, more than 2,000 years ago. These stories were meant to impart worldly wisdom to the dull-witted sons of a king, and have since travelled the world, awakening intelligence in readers across centuries.

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Wisdom for Today from the Timeless Classic

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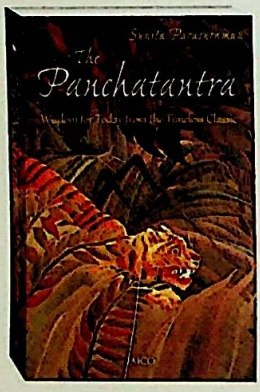
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Wisdom for Today from the Timeless Classic

Sunita Parasuraman



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This book is dedicated to my son Niranjan.
The inspiration to write this book came from
reading these tales to him as a child.

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Author's Introduction

The Purpose of the Book

Importance and relevance of the book

The Panchatantra, whose origins can be traced to ancient India, contains some of the best known tales in the world. Aesop's Fables are believed to have been inspired by *The Panchatantra*. The original work in Sanskrit was written to serve as a practical guide on how to live a fruitful life. This purpose can be best understood from the Introduction in the original which outlines the background in which it came to be written.[1]

In an ancient Indian city, there lived a king who was wise and shrewd and had achieved much fame. This king had three sons who were complete fools. He realized that they would be unfit to rule the kingdom and when the time came for him to retire, he grew worried. He summoned his counsellors and lamented his sons' lack of intelligence and discernment. One of the counsellors knew of a wise scholar named Vishnusharman, who had the reputation of being a master of the sciences and scriptures and of practical life. He suggested to the king that the three princes be entrusted to this scholar, who was bound to make them intelligent in no time. Delighted, the king summoned Vishnusharman and sought his help. Vishnusharman promised the king that the princes would gain mastery in the art of intelligent living in six months. The king happily let Vishnusharman take the boys home. Understanding that they were dull, the new tutor devised a way of training them through the medium of stories. Within six months the princes were

[1] *Arthur Ryder's Introduction* reproduces Ryder's translation of the Sanskrit Introduction

transformed. Since then, this work, taking the name "*Panchatantra*", or "The Five Books", has traveled the world, awakening intelligence in readers across centuries.

Thus the Sanskrit original presents the art of practical living in the form of wise and witty stories in most of which the actors are animals. It is perhaps the greatest treatise on political science and human conduct. What is fascinating about *The Panchatantra* is that the book offers deep insights and wisdom that are as relevant today as they were when the book was written, several hundred years ago. Basic human nature has not changed at all through the passage of time. Only the setting is different; like the king in *The Panchatantra* is the boss at the office today. The reader can therefore easily relate to the characters and situations in the stories. That makes the book immensely enjoyable, relevant and beneficial. It teaches us to deal with the complexities of human emotion and behaviour in the most appropriate manner possible. The stories teach us to analyse situations objectively and to deal with them in a sharp, shrewd manner, without becoming emotional and more importantly, by doing what is right and not compromising on our values. The efficacy of cultivating a detached attitude that is free from sentimentality is highlighted, for it is this attitude alone that can help us apply what we have learned from *The Panchatantra* in moments of crisis.

The book has much to offer to any deep-thinking reader whose life demands the ability to deal with people wisely or who simply enjoys studying human behaviour. It is so well-written – rich in substance and beautifully presented – that it is bound to captivate any mature reader: parents, professionals and young adults alike. The wise Vishnusharman clearly notes that the book is not meant for those who have decided to renounce the world or lead a life of solitude. Rather, it is a treasure for those of us who live in this world and seek to win the utmost possible joy from it, within the parameters of our destiny.

Why a rewrite?

This book is a re-write of Arthur W. Ryder's translation of the original Sanskrit work *The Panchatantra*, published by The University of Chicago Press in 1925. Though Arthur Ryder's original work is a masterpiece in translation, it was written in 1925 and naturally, the language used is quite archaic, making the book a tough read. The stories in the Sanskrit original and the translated version are interwoven. That makes the format complex and the gist of each story is lost. It also obstructs the flow of narrative and the reader is often left confused about the continuity and order. Lastly, since all the stories are based in Hindu India, there are numerous references to Hindu Gods and Goddesses, Brahmins and other aspects of the Hindu way of life, making comprehension a challenge for a reader who is unfamiliar with this background.

Hence, the objective of this book is to broaden the appeal of *The Panchatantra*'s simple and timeless truths to reach out to a modern audience. Changes have been made with the sole objective of serving the needs of today's busy reader. I have broken up the stories individually. The simplified structure should make for much easier reading. The prose has been modified wherever necessary, substituting archaic English with modern language. Lengthy descriptions have been condensed. Some stories have been omitted since they are repetitive in the truths that they are designed to convey. Unfamiliar Hindu terms have been suitably substituted. In the original format, since so many aspects of human nature are dealt with in each story, it is hard to isolate the main theme that each tries to convey. Therefore highlighting this theme by way of reiterating the "Principle" in simple terms at the end of each story attempts to clearly summarize the wisdom contained therein. Even a quick perusal of these pithy "Principles" is bound to set today's jet-setting reader on a more contemplative track.

I was inspired to re-write this book chiefly because I have personally benefited immensely from this work. I am a straightforward, sincere person who finds it hard to take

shortcuts to get ahead in life. Yet, I find that I am constantly surrounded by people who are prone to deviousness and cunning. While my sense of integrity would never permit me to flinch from my values, I find that it is crucial for me to understand the minds of such people, so that I can deal with tricky situations wisely. While we can arm ourselves with good educational qualifications and hard work, there is so much more that life throws at us unexpectedly. Handling these situations demands of us maturity, awareness, careful thought and a lot of plain commonsense, none of which can be taught easily at school or at home. It is precisely this practical help that *The Panchatantra* offers in abundance. The book is a treasure trove of solutions and tools that would enable us to deal with people and situations with intelligence and calmness. It teaches us how to live intelligently. The clarity and depth of advice contained in this book is a million-fold superior to the aid that the numerous modern day self-help books attempt to provide.

Content of the rewrite

Arthur Ryder offers a brilliant introduction to the book. I have let that remain largely untouched since it reads so beautifully and highlights the purpose and greatness of the Sanskrit original most eloquently. He has translated prose for prose and verse for verse. Verses run liberally through various tales. These verses are for the most part quotations from sacred writings or other sources of dignity and authority and indeed they bring out the real character of *The Panchatantra*. The stories are indeed charming when regarded as pure narrative; but it is the beauty, wisdom and wit contained in the verses which lift *The Panchatantra* far above the league of the best story books. I have retained the verse-translations in their original format, some of which may require the reader to mull over the meaning carefully, since the language is not simple. The exercise is well worth the effort and only adds to the pleasure of reading this book.

The original version comprises five books, each consisting of a

theme-based cover story or what we will call a 'framing' story, and numerous stories revolving around the cover story. Each story is told, as the situation demands, by one or the other of the characters in the main narrative. In the spirit of keeping the format simple, the framing story from each of the first four books has been fleshed out in detail. The smaller stories then inserted from each book have been broken into separate, stand-alone stories. So in the rewritten version, Book One relates the broken friendship of Rusty the lion and Lively the bull, told for the most part by the two jackals, Victor and Cheek. Book Two is a tale of friendship between Swift the crow, Gold the mouse, Slow the turtle and Spot the deer. Book Three is the story of the war between crows and owls. These three framing stories are quite long and show great skill in construction. The framing story of Book Four is shorter, it is the tale of the monkey and the crocodile. The original framing story of Book Five has been eliminated since it seems fragmented and does not have anything new to offer. Arthur Ryder notes that Books Four and Five have the appearance of being addenda to the original. There are a total of fifty two separated, stand alone stories, appearing after the framing story in each book. Add these to the four main framing stories, and you have fifty six stories in all, in this rewrite of *The Panchatantra*. The titles used in the rewrite are the same as those in the Ryder translation.

The book makes for delightful reading and nourishes the soul. It is very rare to find simple format, rich poetry, practical wisdom and lofty ideals all come together in one book. And that is exactly what *The Panchatantra* is – a timeless masterpiece that teaches us how to lead a life of lasting joy in this world.

—Sunita Parasuraman
Fremont, California
July 2010

Arthur Ryder's Introduction

One Vishnusharman, shrewdly gleaning
All worldly wisdom's inner meaning,
In these five books the charm compresses
Of all such books the world possesses.

—*Introduction to The Panchatantra*

The Panchatantra contains the most widely known stories in the world. If it were further declared that *The Panchatantra* is the best collection of stories in the world, the assertion could hardly be disproved, and would probably command the assent of those possessing the knowledge for a judgement. Assuming varied forms in their native India, then traveling across Persia, Arabia, Syria and other civilized countries of Europe, these stories have, for more than twenty centuries, brought delight to hundreds of millions.

Since the stories gathered in *The Panchatantra* are ancient, and since they can no longer be ascribed to their respective authors, it is not possible to give an accurate report of their genesis, while much in their subsequent history will always remain obscure. Dr. Hertel, the learned and painstaking editor of the text used by the present translator, believes that the original work was composed in Kashmir, about 200 B.C. At the time, however, many of the individual stories were already ancient. He then enumerates no less than twenty five recensions of the work in India. The text translated here is late, dating from the year 1199 A.D.

The intention here is not to summarize the history of these

stories in India, nor their travels through the Near East and Europe. Simply put, the story is attractive – whose interest would not be kindled by learning, for example, that in this work he makes the acquaintance of one of La Fontaine's important sources? Yet here, as elsewhere, the work of the "scholars" has been of somewhat doubtful value, diverting attention from the primary to the secondary, from literature itself to facts, more or less important, about literature. The present version has not been compiled by a scholar, but by the opposite of a scholar, a lover of good books, eager, so far as his powers permit, to extend an accurate and joyful acquaintance with the world's masterpieces. He will therefore not endeavor to tell the history of *The Panchatantra*, but to tell what *The Panchatantra* is.

Whoever learns the work by heart,
Or through the story-teller's art
Becomes acquainted,
His life by sad defeat – although
The king of heaven be his foe –
Is never tainted.



—Introduction to The Panchatantra

The Panchatantra is a *niti-shastra*, or a textbook of *niti*. The word *niti* roughly translates as "the wise conduct of life." Western civilization must endure a certain shame in realizing that no precise equivalent of the term is found in English, French, Latin or Greek. Many words are therefore necessary to explain what *niti* is, though the idea, once grasped, is clear, important and satisfying.

First of all, *niti* presupposes that one has considered, and rejected, the possibility of living as a saint. It can be practised only by a social being, and represents an admirable attempt to answer the insistent question of how to draw the utmost possible joy from life in the world of men.

The inherently negative foundation is security. For example, if one is a mouse, his dwelling must contain recesses beyond the reach of a cat's paw. Pleasant stanzas concerning the necessity of security are scattered throughout the work. Thus:

The poor are in peculiar need
Of being secret when they feed;
The lion killed the ram who could
Not check his appetite for food.

Or again:

In houses where no snakes are found,
One sleeps; or where the snakes are bound:
But perfect rest is hard to win
With serpents bobbing out and in.

The mere negative foundation of security requires a considerable exercise of intelligence, since the world swarms with rascals, and no sensible man can imagine them capable of reformation.

Caress a rascal as you will,
He was and is a rascal still:
All salve- and sweating-treatments fail
To take the kink from doggy's tail.

Yet roguery can be defeated, for it is stupid by nature.

Since scamp and sneak and snake
So often undertake
A plan that does not thrive,
The world wags on, alive.

Having made provision for security, in the realization that

A man to thrive
Must keep alive,

one faces the necessity of having money. *The Panchatantra*, being very wise, never commits the vulgar error of supposing money to be important. Money must be there, in reasonable amount, because it is unimportant, and which wise man permits unimportant things to occupy his mind? Time and again *The Panchatantra* insists on the misery of poverty, as with greatest detail in the story "Gold's Gloom" in the second book, never perhaps more emphatically than in the stanza:

A beggar to the graveyard hied
And there 'Friend corpse, arise,' he cried;
"One moment lift my heavy weight
Of poverty; for I of late
Grow weary, and desire instead
Your comfort; you are good and dead."
The corpse was silent. He was sure
'Twas better to be dead than poor.

Needless to say, worldly property need not be, indeed should not be, too extensive, since it has value never in possession, only in use:

In case of horse or book or sword,
Of woman, man or lute or word,
The use or uselessness depends
On qualities the user lends.

Now for the positive content of *niti*. Granted security and

freedom from degrading worry, joy results from three occupations – resolute, yet circumspect use of the power of action; intercourse with like-minded friends; and above all, the worthy exercise of intelligence.

To begin with, to experience true joy in the world of men, resolute action is absolutely necessary. The difficulties involved are inevitable:

There is no toy
Called easy joy;
But man must strain
To body's pain.

Time and again this note is struck – the difficulty and the inestimable reward of sturdy action. Perhaps the most splendid expression of this essential part of *niti* is found in the third book, in the words with which the crow, Live-Strong, addresses his king, Cloudy:

A noble purpose to attain
Desiderates extended pain,
Asks man's full greatness, pluck and care,
And loved ones aiding with a prayer.
Yet, if it climb to heart's desire,
What man of pride and fighting fire,
Of passion and of self-esteem
Can bear the unaccomplished dream?
His heart indignantly is bent
(Through its achievement) on content.

Equal stress is laid upon the winning and retaining of intelligent friends. The very name of the second book is "The Winning of

Friends"; the name of the first book is "The Loss of Friends." Throughout the whole work, we are never permitted to be oblivious for long, of the rarity, the necessity, and the pricelessness of friendship with excellent minds. For indeed,

The days when meetings do not fail
With wise and good
Are lovely clearings on the trail
Through life's wild wood.

So speaks Slow, the turtle while Swift, the crow, expresses it thus:

They taste the best of bliss, are good,
And find life's truest ends,
Who, glad and gladdening, rejoice
In love, with loving friends.

Last of all occupations, and in a sense including all else, is the use of intelligence. Without it, no human joy is possible, certainly nothing beyond animal happiness.

For if there be no mind
Debating good and ill,
And if religion send
No challenge to the will,
If only greed be there
For some material feast,
How draw a line between
The man-beast and the beast?

One must have at disposal all valid results of scholarship, yet one must not be a scholar. For,

Scholarship is less than sense;
Therefore seek intelligence.

One must command a wealth of detailed fact, ever alert to the deceptiveness of apparent fact, since oftentimes

The firefly seems a fire, the sky looks flat;
Yet sky and fly are neither this nor that.

One must understand that there is no substitute for judgement, and no end to the reward for discriminating judgement:

To know oneself is hard, to know
Wise effort, effort vain;
But accurate self-critics are
Secure in times of strain.

One must be ever conscious of the past, yet only regard it as a source of fodder for wisdom, never as an object of brooding regret:

For lost and dead and past
The wise have no laments:
Between the wise and fools
Is just this difference.

This is the lofty consolation offered by a woodpecker to a hen-sparrow whose eggs have been crushed by an elephant delirious with spring fever. And the whole matter finds its most admirable expression in the noble words of Cheek, the jackal:

What is learning whose attaining
Sees no passion wane, no reigning
Love and self-control?
Does not make the mind a menial,
Finds in virtue no congenial
Path and final goal?
Whose attaining is but straining
For a name, and never gaining
Fame or peace of soul?

This is *niti*, the harmonious evolving of the powers of man, a life in which security, prosperity, resolute action, friendship, and good learning are so combined as to produce joy. It is a noble ideal, putting to shame many tawdry ambitions, many vulgar catchwords of our day. And this noble ideal is presented in an artistic form of perfect fitness, in five books of wise and witty stories, in most of which the actors are animals.

Better with the learned dwell,
Even though it be in hell
Than with the vulgar spirits roam
Palaces that gods call home.

—Panchatantra, Book Two

The word Panchatantra means "Five Books", the Pentateuch. Each of the five books stands independent, consisting of a central framing story along with numerous inserted stories. The large majority of the characters are animals, who are, of course, fairly consistent in character. Thus, the lion is strong but dull of wit, the jackal crafty, the heron stupid, the cat a hypocrite. The animal actors present, far more vividly and more urbanely than men could do, the view of life recommended here – a view shrewd, undeceived and free of all sentimentality; a view that,

piercing the humbug of every false ideal, reveals with incomparable wit, the sources of lasting joy.

—Arthur W. Ryder
Berkeley, California
July, 1925

Introduction from the Original Sanskrit Work

One Vishnusharman, shrewdly gleaning
All worldly wisdom's inner meaning,
In these five books the charm compresses
Of all such books the world possesses.
And this is how it happened.

In the southern part of the country is a city called Maidens' Delight. There lived a king named Immortal-Power. He was familiar with all the works teaching the wise conduct of life. His feet were made dazzling by the tangle of rays of light from jewels in the diadems of mighty kings who knelt before him. He had reached the far shore of all the arts that embellish life. This king had three sons. Their names were Rich-Power, Fierce-Power, Endless-Power and they were supremely thick-headed.

Now when the king perceived that they were hostile to education, he summoned his counsellors and said: "Gentlemen, it is known to you that these sons of mine, being hostile to education, are lacking in discernment. So when I behold them, my kingdom brings me no happiness, though all external thorns are removed. For there is wisdom in the proverb:

Of sons unborn, or dead, or fools,
Unborn or dead will do:
They cause a little grief, no doubt;
But fools, a long life through.

And again:

To what good purpose can a cow
That brings no calf or milk, be bent?
Or why beget a son who proves
A dunce and disobedient?

Some means must therefore be devised to awaken their intelligence."

And the counsellors, one after another, replied: "O King, first one learns grammar, in twelve years. If this subject has somehow been mastered, then one masters the books on religion and practical life. Then the intelligence awakens."

But one of them, a counsellor named Keen, said: "O King, the duration of life is limited and the verbal sciences require much time for mastery. Therefore let some alternate kind of method be devised to awaken their intelligence. There is a proverb that says:

Since verbal science has no final end,
Since life is short, and obstacles impend,
Let central facts be picked and firmly fixed,
As swans extract the milk with water mixed.

"Now there is a Brahmin named Vishnusharman, with a reputation for competence in numerous sciences. Entrust the princes to him. He will certainly make them intelligent in a twinkling."

When the king had listened to this, he summoned Vishnusharman and said, "Holy sir, as a favor to me, you must make these princes incomparable masters of the art of practical life. In return, I will bestow upon you a hundred land-grants."

And Vishnusharman replied to the king, "O King, listen. Here is the plain truth. I am not the man to sell good learning for the price of a hundred land-grants. But if I do not, in six months' time, make the boys acquainted with the art of intelligent living, I will give up my own name. Let us cut the matter short. Listen to my lion-roar. My boasting arises from no greed for cash. Besides, I have no use for money; I am eighty years old and all the objects of sensual desire have lost their charm for me. But in order that your request be granted, I will show a sporting spirit in reference to artistic matters. Make a note of the date. If, in six months' time, I fail to render your sons incomparable masters of the art of intelligent living, then His Majesty is at liberty to show me His Majestic bare bottom."

When the king, surrounded by his counsellors, had listened to the Brahman's highly unconventional promise, he was filled with wonder, entrusted the princes to him and experienced supreme content.

Meanwhile, Vishnusharman took the boys home and made them learn by rote, five books which he composed and called: (1) "The Loss of Friends", (2) "The Winning of Friends", (3) "Crows and Owls", (4) "Loss of Gains" and (5) "Ill-considered Action".

These the princes learned and in six months' time they answered the prescription. Since that day this work on the art of intelligent living, called *Panchatantra*, or the "Five Books," has traveled the world, aiming at the awakening of intelligence. To sum the matter up:

Whoever learns the work by heart,
Or through the story-teller's art
Becomes acquainted,
His life by sad defeat – although
The king of heaven be his foe –
Is never tainted.

Book 1

The Loss of Friends

The first verse of this book runs:

The forest lion and the bull
Were linked in friendship, growing, full:
A jackal then estranged the friends
For greedy and malicious ends.

In the southern part of the country was a city called Maidens' Delight. It was paradise on earth, abounding in every urban excellence. In this city of riches there lived a merchant named Increase. He possessed several virtues and was also very wealthy. Most definitely a result of merit accumulated in earlier lives.

One night, he pondered thus, "Even if money is abundant, it should be increased. Riches unearned should be earned. What is earned should be protected. What is protected should be invested carefully, so it appreciates in value. Letting money lie unemployed when opportunities arise, is the same as not possessing money. Therefore, money once acquired, should be guarded, increased and employed well."

Armed with these thoughts, he set out for the city of Mathura with his servants. Bearing the yoke of his cart, were two bulls named Joyful and Lively. Presently he reached a forest, full of dense vegetation, water, caves and wild life. Here Lively was overcome with tiredness from pulling the excessive weight of the wagon. His foot sank into a muddy spot along the way. Too tired to extricate himself, he somehow snapped the yoke and

sank to the ground. When the driver saw him on the ground, he jumped from the wagon, ran to the merchant and said, "Oh, my lord! Lively grew weary and just sank in the mud."

On hearing this, Increase was deeply dejected. He waited five nights for the bull to recover. But when Lively's condition failed to improve, he left caretakers with a supply of fodder and said, "You must join me later, bringing Lively along if he lives; and if he dies, after performing his last rites." Having given these directions he started for his destination.

The caretakers, fearful of the forest, left the very next day and gave a false report to the master. "Poor Lively died," they said, "and we performed the last rites with much sorrow." The merchant, feeling grief for a mere moment, performed a ceremony that included rites for the departed, out of gratitude, and then journeyed unhindered to Mathura.

Meanwhile, since fate willed it and since further life was predestined for Lively, he was able to hobble to the banks of the river. He drank water from the river Jamuna, ate the grass that grew there in abundance and in a few days, regained his strength.

One day, a lion named Rusty came to the river with his followers for water. There he heard Lively's prodigious bellow. The sound troubled his heart greatly but he concealed his inner feelings.

Rusty's kingship was grand and magnificent. It was marked by a high sense of self-esteem and a native zeal for unchecked power that brooked no rival. He detested flattery and cringing speech. He governed with fearlessness and shone in his reliance on enterprise, valor and dignity. He was independent, unattached and free from selfish worry. His reign recorded no account of revenue and expenditure. He knew no deviousness and was filled with the energy earned by loftiness of spirit. Rusty had an uncommon appetite for power, never adopted subterfuges and was never an object of suspicion. As the proverb says:

The lion needs, in forest station,
No trappings and no education,
But lonely power and pride;
And all the song his subjects sing,
Is in the words: "O King! O King!"
No epithet beside.

The lion needs, for his appointing,
No ceremony, no anointing;
His deeds of heroism bring
Him fortune. Nature crowns him king.

Rusty had among his followers, two jackals named Cheek and Victor. They were sons of counsellors, but out of a job. They conferred secretly and Victor said, "My dear Cheek, just look at our master Rusty. He came this way for water. Why does he crouch here so disconsolate?" "Why meddle in others' affairs my dear fellow? We are both dependent on his leftovers for our living," replied Cheek.

"But," said Victor, "how can you render first-rate service motivated merely by a desire for food with no desire for distinction? There is wisdom in the sayings:

In hurting foes and helping friends
The wise perceive the proper ends
Of serving kings. The belly's call
To answer, is no job at all.

When many lives on one depend,
Then life is life indeed:
A crow, with beak equipped, can fill
His belly's selfish need.

If loving kindness be not shown
To friends and souls in pain,
To teachers, servants and one's self.
What use in life, what gain?
A crow will live for many years
And eat the offered grain.

For if there be no mind
Debating good and ill,
And if religion send
No challenge to the will,
If only greed be there
For some material feast,
How draw a line between
The man-beast and the beast?"

"But at present," said Cheek, "the two of us hold no job at court. So why intervene?" "My dear fellow," said Victor, "we must just be patient and we are bound to find a job. You see, our master is frightened, his servants are also frightened and he does not know what to do." "How can you be sure of that?" asked Cheek and Victor replied, "Isn't it plain?

Men of wisdom can infer
Unuttered thought from features' stir –
For wit rewards its worshiper.

From feature, gesture, gait,
From twitch or word
From change in eye or face
Is thought inferred.

So by virtue of my native intelligence, I intend to bring him into my power this very day."

"But," said Cheek, "you do not know how to make yourself useful to a superior. So tell me. How do you plan to establish power over him?"

"And why do you say that, my good fellow?" said Victor. The proverb so beautifully describes the duty of a functionary:

No burden enervates the strong;
To enterprise no road is long;
The well-informed all countries range;
To flatterers no man is strange."

Cheek objected, "He could begin to despise you for forcing yourself into a position that does not belong to you." "Yes," said Victor, "you do have a point there. However, I am also a judge of occasions. And there are rules which I am well aware of, as follows:

The Lord of Learning, speaking to
A false occasion,
Will meet with hatred and of course
Lack all persuasion.

The favorite's business comes to be
A sudden source of king's ennui,
When he is thoughtful, trying scents,
Retiring, or in conference.

Let everyone be cautious
In palaces of kings;
And let not students rummage
In their professor's things:

For naughty meddlers suffer
Destruction swift and sure,
Like evening candles, lighted
In houses of the poor.

Though ignorant and common,
Unworth the honoring,
Men win to royal favor
By standing near the king:
For kings and vines and maidens
To nearest neighbors cling.

The servant in his master's face
Discerns the signs of wrath and grace
And though the master jerk and tack,
The servant slowly mounts his back.

The brave, the learned, he who wins
To bureaucratic power –
These three, alone of all mankind,
Can pluck earth's golden flower.

And listen to how power is gained by dancing attendance on a master:

Win the friendly counsellors,
To the monarch dear,
Win persuasive speakers; so
Gain the royal ear.

On the undiscerning mob
'Tis not wise to toil:

No man reaps a harvest by
Plowing barren soil.

Serve a king of merit, though
Friendless, destitute;
After some delay, you pluck
Long-enduring fruit.

Hate your master, and you fill
Servant's meanest state:
Not discerning whom to serve,
Tis yourself you hate.

Treat the dowager, the queen,
And the king-to-be,
Chaplain, porter, counsellor,
Most obsequiously.

One who flatters when addressed,
Does the proper things,
Acts without expressing doubts,
Is beloved of kings.

One, the royal gifts of cash
Prudently who flings,
Wearing gifts of garments, he
Is beloved of kings.

One who never makes reply
That his master stings,
Never boisterously laughs,
Is beloved of kings.

One who never hearkens to
Queenly whisperings,
In the women's quarters dumb,
Is beloved of kings.

One who, even in distress,
Never boasts and sings
Of his master's favor, he
Is beloved of kings.

One who hates his master's foe,
Loves his friend and brings
Pain or joy to either one,
Is beloved of kings.

One who never disagrees,
Blames, or pulls the strings
Of intrigue with enemies,
Is beloved of kings.

One who finds in battle, peace
Free from questionings,
Thinks of exile as of home,
Is beloved of kings.

One who thinks of dice as death,
Wine as poison-stings,
Others' wives as statues, he
Is beloved of kings."

"Well," said Cheek, "when you come into his presence, what do you intend to say? Please tell me." Victor replied,

"A clever servant shows his master
The gleam of triumph or disaster
From good or evil courses springing,
And shows him wit, decision-bringing.

The man possessing such a wit
Should magnify and foster it;
Thereby he earns a livelihood
And public honor from the good."

"But," said Cheek, "kings are hard to conciliate."

"Quite true," said Victor. "However:

The clever man soon penetrates
The subject's mind and captivates.

Cringe and flatter him when angry;
Love his friend and hate his foe;
Duly advertise his presents –
Trust no magic – win him so.

If a man excel in action,
Learning, fluent word,
Make yourself his humble servant
While his power is stirred,
Quick to leave him at the moment
When he grows absurd.

Plant your words where profit lies:
Whiter cloth takes faster dyes."

Cheek replied, "If you have made up your mind, then go and

seek the king's good graces. Good luck in your journey. May you accomplish the purpose of your visit."

Victor bowed to his friend and went to meet Rusty. When Rusty saw Victor approaching, he said to the doorkeeper, "This is an old acquaintance, the counsellor's son Victor. He has free entrance. Let him come in." So Victor entered, bowed to Rusty and sat down on the seat indicated to him.

Rusty extended his right paw adorned with claws as formidable as thunderbolts and enquired respectfully, "Do you enjoy good health? Why have you been away for so long?" Victor replied, "Even though my royal master has no present need for me, I ought to report at the proper time. Besides, we who are ancestral servants of our royal master, follow him even in distress. For us there is no other course. The proverb says:

Servants leave the kings who their
Qualities ignore,
Even kings of lofty line,
Wealthy, served of yore.

Lacking honor from their equals,
Jobless, déclassé,
Servants give their master notice
That they will not stay.

If set in tin, a gem that would
Adorn a golden flame,
Will never scream nor fail to gleam,
Yet tell its wearer's shame.

The king who reads a servant's mind –
Dull, faithless, faithful, wise –
May servants find of every kind
For every enterprise.

And as for your remark that I have remained away for too long, please hear the reason for that:

Where just distinction is not drawn
Between the left and right,
The self-respecting, if they can,
Will quickly take to flight.

If masters no distinction make
Among their servants, then
They lose the zealous offices
Of energetic men.

And in a market where it seems
That no distinctions hold
Between red-eye and ruby, how
Can precious gems be sold?

There must be bonds of union
In all their dealings, since
No prince can lack his servants
Nor servants lack a prince.

Yet, the nature of the servant also depends on the master's virtues. Also, you do wrong to despise me because I am a jackal. For:

Silk comes from worms and gold from stone;
From cow's hair sacred grass is grown;
The water-lily springs from mud;
From cow-dung sprouts the lotus-bud;
The moon its rise from ocean takes;

And gems proceed from hoods of snakes;
From cows' bile yellow dyestuffs come;
And fire in wood is quite at home:
The worthy, by display of worth,
Attain distinction, not by birth.

Kill, although domestic born,
Any hurtful mouse:
Bribe an alien cat who will
Help to clean the house.

How use the faithful, lacking power?
Or strong, who evil do?
But me, O King, you should not scorn,
For I am strong and true.

Scorn not the wise who penetrate
Truth's universal law;
They are not men to be restrained
By money's petty straw.

"Oh," said Rusty, "you must not say such things. You are our counsellor's son, an old servant of the kingdom." "O King," said Victor, "I have an observation to make. My master, you set out to take water. Why did you turn back and camp here?" Rusty, concealing his inner feelings, said, "Victor, it just happened so." "O King," said the jackal, "if it is something you do not wish to disclose, then let it be.

Some things a man should tell his wife,
Some things to friend and some to son;
All these are trusted. He should not
Tell everything to everyone."

Rusty then reflected, "He seems trustworthy. I will tell him what I have in mind. For the proverb says:

You find repose, in sore disaster,
By telling things to powerful master,
To honest servant, faithful friend,
Or wife who loves you till the end.

Friend Victor, did you hear a great voice in the distance?" "Yes master, I did," said Victor. "What of it?"

Rusty continued, "My good fellow, I intend to leave this forest because there is in our midst some prodigious creature, from whom we hear this great voice. His powers must match his voice."

"What!" said Victor. "Is our master frightened by a mere voice? You surely know the proverb:

Water undermines the dykes;
Love dissolves when malice strikes;
Secrets melt when babblings start;
Simple words melt dastard hearts.

So it would be improper if our master left the forest abruptly. This forest was won by our ancestors and has been in the family for so long. For they say:

Wisely move one foot; the other
Should its vantage hold;
Till assured of some new dwelling,
Do not leave the old.

Besides, many kinds of sounds are heard here. Yet they are but

noises, not signals of danger. For example, we hear the sounds made by thunder, conch-shells, bells, banging doors, machines and other things. These are nothing to be afraid of. As the verses say:

If a king be brave, however
Fierce the foe and grim,
Sorrows of humiliation
So not wait for him.

Bravest bosoms do not falter,
Fearing heaven's threat:
Summer dries the pools; the Indus
Rises, greater yet.

Mothers bear on rare occasions
To the world a chief,
Glad in luck and brave in battle,
Undepressed in grief.

Do not act as does the grass-blade,
Lacking honest pride,
Drooping low in feeble meanness,
Lightly brushed aside.

My master should adopt a courageous attitude, remain resolute and not fear a mere sound."

"But," said Rusty, "my followers are terrified and wish to run away. How am I to remain resolute?" Victor answered, "Master, they are not to blame, for servants take after the master. In any case, let me ascertain the nature of this creature and get back to you. Then you may act as you think fit." "What!" said Rusty, "do you have the pluck to go there?" Victor answered, "When

the master commands, will the good servant ever treat anything to be impossible? As the proverb says:

Good servants, when their lords command,
Behold no fear on any hand,
Cross pathless seas if he desire
Or gladly enter flaming fire.

The servant who, his lord commanding,
Should strive to reach an understanding
On labors hard or easy, he
King's counsellor should never be."

"If you feel so, my dear fellow," said Rusty, "then go. May your journey be blessed!"

So Victor bowed low and set out in the direction of the sound made by Lively. When he was gone, fear gripped Rusty's heart and he thought, "Ah! I made a sad mistake in trusting him to the point of revealing what is in my mind. Perhaps this Victor will betray me by taking wages from both parties, or out of sheer spite at having lost his job. For the proverb says:

A servant suffering from a king
Dishonor after honoring,
Though born and trained to service, will
Be eager to destroy him still.

So I will go elsewhere and wait, in order to learn his purpose. Victor may even bring this creature along and try to kill me. As the saying goes:

The trustful strong are caught
By weaker foes with ease;
The wary weak are safe
From strongest enemies."

He thus calmed his mind, went elsewhere and waited all alone, cautiously watching Victor's moves.

Meanwhile Victor drew near Lively, discovered that he was a bull and reflected gleefully, "Well, well! This is lucky. I shall get Rusty into my power by dangling before him war or peace with this fellow. As the proverb puts it:

All counsellors draw profit from
A king in worries pent,
And that is why they always wish
For him, embarrassment.

As men in health require no drug
Their vigor to restore,
So kings, relieved of worry, seek
Their counsellors no more."

With these thoughts in mind, he returned to see Rusty. Seeing him coming, Rusty assumed his former attitude in an effort to make Victor feel at home in his presence. After Victor came near, bowed low and seated himself, Rusty said, "My good fellow, did you see the creature?" "I saw him," said Victor, "through my master's grace." "Are you telling the truth?" asked Rusty. Victor answered, "How could I report anything else to my gracious master? For the proverb says:

Whoever makes before the king
Small statements, but untrue,
Brings certain ruin on his gods
And on his teacher, too."

"Yes," said Rusty, "I suppose you really did see him. The great do not become angry with meeker folk. As the proverb goes:

The hurricane innocuous passes
O'er feeble, lowly bending grasses,
But tears at lofty trees: the great
Their prowess greatly demonstrate."

Victor replied, "I knew you would trust me. I will bring the creature into my gracious master's presence." When Rusty heard this, joy spread over his face and his mind felt supreme satisfaction.

Victor then returned and called out to Lively, "Come here, you villainous bull! Come here! Our master Rusty asks why you are not afraid to keep up this meaningless bellowing." Lively answered, "My good fellow, who is this person named Rusty?"

"What?!" said Victor, "you do not even know our master Rusty?" He continued with indignation, "You must be taught a lesson. He is the king of this forest. His followers include all kinds of animals. He dwells below the spreading banyan tree. His heart is held high with pride. He is the lord of life and wealth. His name is Rusty and he is a mighty lion."

When Lively heard this, he thought himself as good as dead and grew deeply dejected, saying, "My dear fellow, you seem sympathetic and eloquent. Please save me from your master." "You are taking the right approach," said Victor. "For:

The earth has a limit,
The mountains, the sea;
The deep thoughts of kings are
Without boundary.

Please remain in this spot. I shall talk to him in detail about you and will then come back and take you to him."

Victor then returned to Rusty and said, "Master, he is no ordinary creature. He says he has been blessed by the Gods

themselves with fearlessness. He says the Gods have granted this forest to him to be used as a playground."

At this Rusty grew frightened and said, "I knew it. I knew it. Only by the special favor of God do creatures wander in a wild wood, bellowing like that and fearlessly cropping grass. But what did you say to him?"

"Master", said Victor, "I said to him: "This forest is the domain of Rusty, the king of lions. You must greet him as a guest would, must spend your time in brotherly love, must eat, drink and make your home with him." He promised to do so, adding, "You must make your master promise to protect me in this forest." I replied saying that you were the sole judge to decide that."

At this Rusty was delighted and said, "Splendid, my intelligent servant, splendid! You have spoken very well indeed. I grant him protection in my forest. You must hasten to bring him here, but not until he too has bound himself by oath to me. Yes, there is sound sense in the saying:

Polished, fully tested,
Sturdy too, and straight
Are the pillars proper
To a house – or state.

Wit is shown in hours of crisis:
Doctors' wit, in sore disease;
Counsellors', in patching friendship –
All are wise in hours of ease.

Victor thought as he set out to meet Lively, "Well, well! The master is gracious to me and ready to do my bidding. So there is none more blessed than I. For:

Four things are nectar: milky food;
A fire in chilly weather;
An honor granted by the king;
And loved ones, come together."

So he found Lively and said respectfully, "My friend, I won the old master's favor for you and made him grant you protection. You may now go without anxiety. Still, though the king views you favorably, you must collaborate with me. In alliance with you, I will take on the role of counsellor and help with the administration of the kingdom. Thus we shall both enjoy royal affluence." "This makes sense dear friend," agreed Lively.

Victor then took him to Rusty and said, "O King, here is Lively. I have brought him to you. You may deal with him as you deem fit." Lively bowed respectfully and stood before the king reverentially. Rusty extended his right paw to him and said, "Do you enjoy good health? Why do you dwell in this wild wood?"

Lively then related the full story of his separation from his master, the merchant named Increase, and everything else that had transpired until then. After listening to this story, Rusty said, "Have no fear, comrade. Protected by my paws, you may lead a carefree life in this forest. This forest houses numerous savage creatures. You must therefore try to spend your time close to me; so I can protect you." Lively answered, "Very well, O King."

The king of beasts then went down to the banks of the river Jamuna, drank and bathed in leisure and roamed about the forest, feeling very relieved.

As time passed, the mutual affection between the two kept increasing. Lively gradually acquired great intelligence by mastering numerous authoritative tasks. He slowly planted the seeds of discrimination in Rusty's otherwise dull mind. He weaned him from forest habits and taught him village manners. Rusty and Lively began to hold secret meetings every day, to

discuss the finer aspects of life.

All the other animals were kept away from these meetings. As for the jackals, they were forbidden from even entering the area. Since the lion was no longer hunting actively, all his followers suffered grievously from hunger and huddled together. As the proverb puts it:

A king, though proud and pure of birth,
Will see his servants flee
A court where no rewards are won,
As birds a withered tree.

They may be honored gentlemen,
They may devoted be,
Yet servants leave a monarch who
Forgets the salary.

A king may scold
Yet servants hold,
If he but pay
Upon the day.

Indeed, all creatures in this world, by adopting cajolery or some other means, live off others. For example:

Some eat the countries; these are kings;
The doctors, those whom sickness stings;
The merchants, those who buy their things;
And learned men, the fools.

The married are the clergy's meat;
The thieves devour the indiscreet;
The flirts their eager lovers eat;
And Labor eats us all.

Now Cheek and Victor, robbed of their master's favor, took counsel with each other. Hunger had driven them to desperation. Victor said, "Cheek, my noble friend, we have almost lost our jobs as counsellors to the king. Rusty takes such delight in his conversations with Lively, that he now neglects his regular duties and activities. The whole court is in disarray. What shall we do?"

Cheek replied, "Even if the master does not take your advice, you should admonish him to correct his faults. For the proverb advises:

Good counsellors should warn a king
Although he pay no heed
To cease from evil deed.

Good counsellors or drivers may not duck
From kings or elephants that run amuck.

Besides, the fault is yours. You were the one to introduce this grass-nibbler to the king."

Victor replied, "Even in these circumstances, I am sure I will have a flash of intelligence that shows me how to separate Lively from the king. They have both fallen prey to serious vice. For:

Mad folly stings
The greatest kings,
Who then embrace a vice;
But servants' care
Should check them there
By means of learning nice."

"To what vice has our master Rusty succumbed?" asked Cheek.

Victor replied, "There are in the world, five situations that are fundamentally vicious. They are: (1) deficiency, (2) corruption, (3) attachment, (4) devastation and (5) mistaken policy.

The vice called "deficiency" means the absence of one or the other of the following: king, counsellor, people, fortress, treasure, punitive power and friends.

"Corruption" arises when subjects, either foreign or native, become restless, whether individually or en masse.

"Attachment" related vices are seven in number, namely: drink, women, hunting, scolding, dice, greed and cruelty. These are further subdivided into a love group (drink, women, hunting and dice) and a wrath group (scolding, greed and cruelty). A man thwarted in the love group becomes obnoxious to the wrath group. The love group requires no elucidation. The wrath group, however, needs some further clarification. "Scolding" is ill-considered imputation of fault on the part of one bent on injuring an antagonist. "Cruelty" means ruthless ways of putting someone to death, imprisonment or mutilation. "Greed" is covetousness pushed to a merciless point. These are the seven subdivisions of the vice of attachment.

Then there are eight kinds of "devastation": by act of God, fire, water, disease, plague, panic, famine and excessive rain.

And then there is "mistaken policy". When a man makes a mistaken use of the six expedients: peace, war, change of base, entrenchment, alliance, duplicity – adopting war instead of peace or peace instead of war, of making similar mistakes in regard to the other expedients, then we have the vice of mistaken policy.

Our master has fallen into the first vice of deficiency. For he has been so captivated by Lively that he pays not the least heed to any counsellor or any of his other supporters. He has adopted some strange sense of morality. There is no need for further discussion. Rusty must somehow be detached from Lively."

"How will you do that?" objected Cheek. "You have not the power." "My dear fellow," said Victor, "in instances where brute force may fail, shrewd strategy is bound to prevail. Indeed, there is nothing in the world that the intelligent cannot control. You know the proverb:

Unceasing effort brings success;
'Fate, fate is all,' let dastards wail:
Smite fate and prove yourself a man;
What faults if bold endeavor fail?"

To this Cheek said, "If you are so determined in your intention, then proceed to the accomplishment of your desire. Blessed be your journey."

Victor then went to the lion, bowed and seated himself. The lion asked, "Why has it been so long since you last came here?" Victor answered, "O King, urgent business awaits my master today. I come to you today, as the bearer of tidings unwelcome but important. Yet I worry that such tidings may be ignored from neglect of immediate and necessary action. As the proverb warns:

When those appointed to advise
Speak wholesome truth, they cause surprise
By this remarkable excess
Of passionate devotedness.

A man is quickly found, O King,
To say the sycophantic thing;
But one prepared to hear or speak
Unwelcome truth, is far to seek."

Believing his words to be worthy of trust, Rusty respectfully asked him, "What do you wish to imply?" Victor answered, "O

King, Lively has slowly monopolized you. He has gained your confidence through treason. On several occasions, he has whispered to me confidentially, 'I have assessed your master's strengths and weaknesses; in his prestige, advisers and material resources. I plan to kill him and to seize the royal power myself without difficulty.' This very day, as we speak, Lively is plotting your end. That is why I am here, to warn the master, in whose service I am beholden."

To Rusty, this report came as a thunderbolt. He sank into panic-stricken stupor and did not utter a word. Comprehending his state of mind, Victor said, "It is sad that such is the result of the discharge of a counsellor's duty. There is wisdom in the saying:

No king should ever delegate
To one sole man the powers of state:
For folly seizes him, then pride,.
Whereat he grows dissatisfied
With service; thus impatient grown,
He longs to rule the realm alone;
And such impatient longings bring
Him into plots to kill his king.

Even now, Lively manages all aspects of business without any restraint."

On hearing this, Rusty said, "After all, he is my servant. Why should he experience a change of heart toward me? My heart does not let me turn against him. For:

However false and fickle grown,
Once dear is always dear:
Who does not love his body, though
Decrepit, blemished, queer?

His actions may be hard to bear,
His speech be harsh to hear;
The heart still clings delighted to
A person truly dear."

"That is precisely why the master should be concerned. You have showered your attention on him to the exclusion of all the other animals and he now desires to become the sole master himself. As the verse aptly puts it:

The man of birth or man unknown,
If kingly eyes on him alone
Are fixed, aspires to seize the throne.

Therefore, dear though he may be, he should be abandoned for being a traitor. There is much wisdom in the saying:

Pursue your aim, abandoning
The fools inclined to sin,
The comrades, brothers, friends or sons,
Or honorable kin:
You know the song the women sing,
We hear it far and near –
What good are gold earrings, if
They lacerate your ear?

If you fancy that he will bring benefit because of his physical stature, you are making a mistake. For:

How use a proud bull-elephant
That will not serve the king?
A man is better, fat or lean,
Who does the helpful thing.

And any pity that you may feel for him is quite out of place. For:

Whoever leaves the righteous path
For some unrighteous course,
Will meet calamity in time
And suffer much remorse.

Whoever will not take from friends
Most excellent advice,
Will gladden foes, and falling soon,
Will pay his folly's price.

Where one will speak and one will heed
What in the end is well,
Although unpleasant at the time,
There riches love to dwell.

Tried servants never should be left,
And strangers taken;
A kingdom's health by no disease
Is sooner shaken."

"My good fellow," said the lion, "please do not say such things. I formerly promised him protection. How then can he be ungrateful to me now?"

Victor rejoined:

"Caress a rascal as you will,
He was and is a rascal still:
All salve and sweating treatments fail
To take the kink from doggy's tail.

Slight kindness shown to lofty souls
A strange enlargement seeks:
The moonbeams gleam with whiter light
On Himalaya's peaks.
But,
The kindness shown to vicious souls
Strange diminution seeks:
The gleam of moonbeams is absorbed
On Sooty Mountain's peaks.

A hundred benefits are lost,
If lavished on the mean;
A hundred epigrams, with their
True relevance unseen;
A hundred counsels, when a life
Obeys no rigid rule;
A hundred cogent arguments
Are lost upon a fool.

Lost is every gift that goes
Where it does not fit;
Lost is service lavished on
Sluggish mind and wit;
Lost upon ingratitude
Is the kindest plan;
Lost is courtesy on one
Not a gentleman.

He is obviously a traitor. So the master must by no means fail to heed my sound advice. For:

Who saves from vice is truly kind;
True wife is she who shares your mind;
True acts are free from every blame;
True joy, from avarice's shame;
True wisdom wins the praise of saints;
True friends involve in no restraints;
True glory knows no haughtiness;
True men are cheerful in distress.

By associating with Lively, my master is making a serious mistake that results in the neglect of three things worth living for – virtue, money and love. And in spite of my warnings, presented from various points of view, my lord chooses to turn a deaf ear. If everything comes crashing in the future, do not blame your servant."

"Such being the case, my good fellow," said the lion, "should I warn him?" "What! Warn him?" said Victor. "What kind of policy would that be? For

He stings or strikes in hasty fear
When warning has been heard:
'Tis wise to warn an enemy
By action, not by word."

Rusty replied, "But he is after all a grass-nibbler. How can he hurt me? Moreover, how am I to recognize that he is treacherous? And what is his fighting technique?"

Victor answered, "Formerly he would walk in the presence of my lord and king with limbs relaxed. If today he approaches slowly, in obvious readiness to thrust his horns into your body, then the king may understand that he has treachery planned in his mind."

At this point Victor rose, bid adieu to Rusty and went to Lively. He presented himself in a disenchanted mood to Lively as well. And Lively asked, "My good fellow, are your spirits low?"

Victor replied, "How can a lowly dependent of the king like myself, be in high spirits?" For you know:

They see their wealth in others' power
Who wait upon a king;
They even fear to lose their lives:
A doleful song they sing.

With birth begin the sorrows which
Forever after cling,
The never ending train of woes
In service of a king.

His food repels; he dare not say
An independent thing;
Though sleepless, he is not awake
Who hangs upon a king.

The common phrase 'a dog's life' has
A most persuasive ring:
But dogs can do the things they like;
A slave obeys his king.

He cannot do the things he would;
He serves another's mind;
He sells his body. How can such
A wretch contentment find?

To sum it all up:

What is my place? My time? My friends?
Expenditure or dividends?
And what am I? And what my power?
So must one ponder hour by hour."

After listening to this and perceiving that Victor had a hidden purpose in mind, Lively asked, "Tell me, my good fellow, what do you wish to imply?"

Victor answered, "Well, you are my friend and I must tell you the truth. The master, Rusty, is filled with wrath against you. He said to me today, 'I will kill Lively and provide a feast for all who eat meat.' Of course, I became very dejected when I heard this. You must now handle this crisis in the best way you can."

This report struck Lively like a thunderbolt and he was crestfallen. As Victor's words tended to be plausible usually, he grew more and more troubled, fell into a panic and said, "The proverb is indeed right:

Women oft are tricked by scamps;
Kings with rascals oft agree;
Toward the skinflint money drifts;
Rain on mountains falls to sea.

Ah me! Ah me! What has befallen me?

You serve your king most heedfully.
Of course. Who would complain?
But enmity as your reward
Is unexpected pain.

If one is angry, giving cause,
Remove it, and the wrath will pause;
But how may man propitiate
A mind the harbors causeless hate?

Alas! What wrong have I done our master Rusty?"

"Comrade," said Victor, "kings love to injure without reason and they seek out the vulnerable spot in their adversary." "True, too true," said Lively. "It is all my fault. I advanced goodness to a false friend. Our master Rusty was all honey at first but he has turned so treacherous now. Ah yes!

He compliments you to your face;
His whispered slanders never stop:
Avoid a friend like that. He is
A poison-jug with cream on top.

He lifts his hands to see you standing there;
His eyes grow moist; he offers half his chair;
He hugs you warmly to his eager breast;
In kindly talk and question finds no rest;
His skill is wondrous in deceptive tricks;
Honey without, within the poison sticks:
What play is this, what strange dramatic turns,
That every villain, like an actor, learns?

At first rogues' friendship glitters bright
With service, flattery, delight;
Thence, in its middle journey, shoot
Gay flowers of speech that fail to fruit;
Its final goal is treason, shame,

Disgust and slanders that defame:
Alas! Who made the cursed thing?
Its one foul purpose is to sting.

They bow abjectly; leap to greet
You with their speech seductive-sweet;
Pursue and hug you day by day;
Of deep devotion make display:
All praise your virtue. Never one
Finds time to do *what should be done.*

Woe to me! How could I, a susceptible herbivore, consort with the king who devours animal meat? There is wisdom in the saying:

Where wealth is very much the same,
And similar the family fame,
Marriage or friendship is secure;
But not between the rich and poor.

The sun, already setting, shows
His final flaming power,
And still the honey-thirsty bee
Explores the lotus-flower,
Forgets that it will prove a trap
That shuts at set of sun:
Ambition, thirsting for reward,
Is blind to dangers run.

Yes, virtues are always accompanied by defects. For:

The fruit-tree's branch by very wealth
Of fruit is bended low;
The peacock's feathered pride compels
A sluggish gait and slow;
The blooded horse that wins his race,
Must like a cow be led:
The good in goodness often find
An enemy to dread.

The man of virtue commonly
Is hateful to the king,
While riches to the scamps and fools
Habitually cling:
The ancient chant 'By virtue great
Is man' has run to seed;
The world takes rare and little note
Of any plucky deed.

By entering into the sphere of a treacherous carnivore, I have ruined my life. But for the king to have such a sudden change of heart, somebody must have set him against me. In any case, I guess my only option now is battle. I should fight this injustice meted out to me. For the proverb teaches:

By gifts, by self-denial,
By sacrificial trial,
Some slowly win to heaven;
To him who yields his life
In glad, heroic strife,
Quick entrance there is given."

To this Victor thought, "The fellow has sharp horns and plenty of vigor. He might perhaps strike down the master. That would be a wrong move. I must use my intelligence to turn his thoughts from fighting." And he said, "My dear fellow, this is not a good plan. One must carefully assess the power of the enemy before deciding to attack him. You are no match for Rusty."

Lively then asked Victor, "Tell me comrade. How should I approach him?" Victor answered, "If he were his old self, he would lie carelessly on a slab of stone, with limbs relaxed. But if his tail is drawn in, if his forepaws are bunched up, his ears pricked up and if he is watching for you while you are still far away, then you may understand that he has treachery in his mind."

Victor then visited Cheek who asked, "What have you accomplished?" Victor replied, "I have successfully set them at odds against each other." "Really?" asked Cheek. Victor replied, "The outcome of it all will prove to you how brilliant my plan is. For:

A well-devised estranging scheme
The firmest prudence shocks,
As constant floods of water split
The mountains' close-piled rocks.

And having wrought an estrangement, a man should not fail to see his own advantage in it. As the verse puts it:

The man who studies every book
And understands, yet does not look
To his advantage, learns in vain;
His books are merely mental strain."

When this Lively is killed, not only will we regain our roles as counsellors; but his meat will also provide us with nourishment."

Back in the forest, after Victor's departure, Lively reflected, "What am I to do? If I go elsewhere, some merciless creature will kill me, for this is a wild wood. When the master is furious, it is not possible even to depart. My best course of action is to approach him. He might take pity on me and spare my life."

Having thus made up his mind, he started out slowly, with troubled spirit and when he perceived the lion in the posture described by Victor, he sank to the ground thinking, "Ah! The unfathomable character of kings! As the proverb describes:

'Tis a house with serpents crawling,
Wood with beasts of prey appalling,
Lotus-ponds where blossoms smile
O'er the lurking crocodile,
Spot that sneaking rogues deface
With repeated slanders base –
Timid servant never learns
Whither kingly purpose turns."

He then steeled himself and bent his horns, signaling his readiness to fight.

Rusty, from his side, seeing the bull in the demeanor that Victor had described, made a sudden spring at him. Lively, though his body was torn by sharp claws, hit at the lion's belly with his horns and stood in an intimidating posture, ready to attack again.

Cheek quickly perceived that they were both intent on killing each other. He said sharply to Victor, "You dunderhead! In setting these two at enmity, you have done a wicked deed. You

have brought trouble and confusion to the entire forest, thus proving that you have no aptitude for statecraft. For the saying goes:

Those are counsellors indeed,
Wise in statecraft, who succeed
In composing reckless strife
That, unhindered, threatens life:
Those on petty purpose bent,
Keen to visit punishment,
Quick in wrong and folly, bring
Risk to kingdom and to king.

Ah, poor fool!

Men of true discernment, first
Try conciliation;
For the victories of peace
Suffer no frustration.

You poor simpleton! You seek the post of counsellor but are so ignorant of the very meaning of conciliation. Your ambition is vain since your nature is too harsh to aspire to the role. As the proverb puts it:

'Tis neither sun nor flashing gem
Nor fiery spark,
'Tis peace, from bitter foeman's hearts
That routs the dark.

Try peaceful means, not harsh, to make
Your quarrel flit:

Take sugar, not cucumber, for
A bilious fit.

The doors that wit unlocks are three –
Peace, shrewd intrigue and bribery;
The fourth device that brings success
In struggle, is plain manliness.

'Tis womanish, no doubt, to show
Small strength, abundant sense;
But power is merely bestial, if
Without intelligence.

If it was overweening pride in being the son of a counsellor that has led you to outrage decency, the result will merely be your ruin. As the proverb rightly says:

What is learning whose attaining
Sees no passion wane, no regaining
Love and self-control?
Does not make the mind a menial,
Finds in virtue no congenial
Path and final goal?
Whose attaining is but straining
For a name, and never gaining
Fame or peace of soul?

In the treatises on the subject of statesmanship, there are five main principles that one must master: proper inception, resources, human and material, determination of place and time, countermeasures for mischance and successful accomplishment. At the present moment, the master finds himself in serious peril. So, if you have any such capacity,

devise countermeasures to help him out. For the wisdom of a counsellor finds its test in the patching up of broken friendship. Ah, you fool! That is not something you can accomplish, for you have a perverted mind. But the fault is after all the master's, who trusts the words of someone as dull-witted as you are. For the proverb says:

Educating sluggish wit
Kills no pride but fosters it:
In the sunlight others find
Aid to vision; owls go blind.

Education thrusts aside
Man's fatuity and pride;
If it foster them, who can
Cure the educated man?
Remedies are useless when
Heaven's nectar poisons men.

Dreadful is the penalty the master will have to pay for taking evil counsel. For:

Monarchs who adopt a plan
From the mean and vicious man,
Who refuse to tread the way
That the prudent counsel – they
Enter misadventure's cage
Where the adversaries rage;
Thence deliverance's gate
Crowns an issue rugged, strait.

Fool! Fool! All the world seeks the service of a master who has a righteous following. How then, can such an evil counsellor as you, who like a beast, can only understand destruction, enrich the master's reputation? For the proverb says:

Monarchs, ill-advised, repel,
Even though they purpose well:
Sweet and placid waters smile,
But beware the crocodile.

Seeking your own advantage, you desire to render our king friendless. Are you ignorant of the verse?

Kings shine as social beings, not
As solitaries;
Whoever wish them lonely are
Their adversaries.

Draw benefit from comments harsh;
No poison, this:
In flattery see treason, not
True nectar's bliss.

If you feel jealous on seeing others happy and prosperous, that too, is wicked. You have enjoyed the master's favor. You should therefore act accordingly. As the verse puts it:

According to his favored state,
A servant's modest, humble gait
Is notably appropriate.

Your character lacks strength. As the proverb says:

The great are firm, though battered, as before;
Great ocean is not fouled by caving shore:
For pretty cause the fickle change and pass;
The gentlest breezes ruffle pliant grass.

But again, the master is more at fault. In pursuit of virtue, money and love, he recklessly takes counsel with one like you; one who lives by the mere pretence of administrative competence, totally ignorant of the proper means to attain success. Yes, there is wisdom in this saying:

If kings are satisfied
With servants at their side
Who ply a wheedling tongue,
Whose bows are never strung,
Then kingly glory goes
Embracing manlier foes.

Your evil conduct demonstrates an inherited lack of executive capacity. Surely, your father before you was the same kind of person. For:

The character of sons
The father e'er reflects:
Who, from a screw-pine tree,
An emblic fruit expects?

In men of learning and native dignity, an inner weakness is not detected even with the lapse of time. It remains hidden, unless of their own accord, these men cast dignity aside and display what is vulnerable in their minds.

Since you are a villain, good advice is wasted on you. For:

Educating minds unfit
Cannot rescue sluggish wit,
Just as house-lamps wasted are,
Set within a covered jar.

You are a disgrace to your family. Of the four types of offspring, you are what is known as "worse-born".

Sons of four divergent kinds
Are discerned by well-trained minds:
'Born,' and 'like-born,' 'better born';
Lastly, 'worse-born' has their scorn.

'Born' the mother's image gives;
'Like-born' like the father lives;
'Better-born' more nobly acts;
'Worse-born' morally subtracts.

Ah! There is wisdom in the saying:

By whom far-piercing wisdom or
Great wealth or power is won
To lift the family, in him
A mother has a son.

A merely striking beauty
Is not so hard to find;
A rarer gem is wisdom,
Far-reaching power of mind.

Oh fool! By your evil mind you have burned your own family. Yes, there is truth in the saying:

Rivers find their ending
In the salty sea;
Household peace, as soon as
Women disagree;
Secrets end that do not
Every traitor shun;
Families are ended
In a wicked son.

Besides, who can trust a creature, whether human or not, that has two tongues in a single mouth? I am myself scared of you now. For:

I would not trust a rascal;
His ways I understand:
The petted, pampered serpent
Will bite the feeding hand.

A fire will burn, though kindled
In fragrant sandalwood:
A rascal is a rascal,
Although his birth is good.

Ah, one must use great circumspection in making acquaintances. As the proverb says:

With the shrewd and upright man
Seek a friendship rare;
Exercise with shrewd and false

Superheedful care;
Pity for the upright fool
Find within your heart;
If a man be fool and false,
Shun him from the start.

If you have such scant respect for your own master, what hope does someone like me have from you?

And you have done this because you could not bear to see the favors bestowed on Lively by Rusty. Yes, there is wisdom in the saying:

Cowards reproach the hero here on earth;
Base-born rascals blame the man of birth;
Misers, him who gives whate'er he can;
Misfit lovers blame the ladies' man;
Rogues, the righteous; cripples blame the straight;
Those unlucky blame the fortunate;
Last, the scholar – 'tis the wretched rule –
Listens to reproaches from the fool.

Learned men from fools have hate;
Rich, from those less fortunate;
Men of virtue, from the vicious;
Wives, from creatures meretricious.

Wise men, even, carry through
What their nature bids them do:
Nature ever will direct;
What can punishment effect?

Instruction has value only for one who grasps what has been

said once. But you are like a stone – brainless and immovable. Why waste effort in instructing you? It is a mistake to even live beside you. A disaster may someday befall me from mere association with you. As the proverb says:

Better plunge in sea or fire,
Hell or deepest pit,
Than associate with one
Quite devoid of wit.

One must therefore never befriend the fools. For:

The saint, however deep his need,
Still shuns the guilt of evil deed;
Still does the deeds that bring no shame
To honorable name and fame.

The wise in need still does the deed
That keeps his honor bright:
The shell a peacock ate and dropped,
Remains a pearly white.

Wrong is wrong; the wise man never
Wrong as right will treat:
None would drink, however thirsty,
Water in the street.

To sum it all up:

Do the right, the right, the right,
Till the breath of death;
Shun the wrong, although the right

Lead to death of breath."

At this, Victor, being a tortuous-minded creature, to whom a sermon advocating such high moral standards was sheer poison, simply slunk away.

At that moment, Rusty and Lively, their minds blinded by rage, renewed the battle. When Rusty had killed Lively, his wrath subsided into pity at the memory of past affection. He wiped his tearful eyes with a blood-smeared paw and penitently said, "Ah, me! It was very wrong. Lively was almost my second life. In killing him, I have only hurt myself. For the proverb says:

When bits are lost of royal land
Or servants true who understand,
The servants' loss is deadly pain;
Lost lands are quickly won again."

Victor, the impudent, perceiving that Rusty was being swayed by irresolution, slowly crept near and said, "Master, what conduct is this, to show yourself emotional after slaying a rival? For the saying runs:

None leaves a father, brother, son
Or bosom-friend alive
Who treasonably threatens him,
If he desires to thrive.

Go however far to find
Honest joy;
Learn from any who is wise,
Though a boy;
Give your life, the altruist's
Bliss to win;

Cut your very arm away,
If it sin.

The morality of kings has nothing in common with that of ordinary men. As the proverb says:

To ruling monarchs let no trace
Of common nature cling;
For what is vice in other men,
Is virtue in a king."

Saying so, Victor walked away.

At that point, Cheek sat down beside Rusty and said to him, "Sir, you know nothing of the business of administration, since the stirring of strife means the destruction of those who enjoyed mutual friendship. A good counsellor would never advise the master to fight his own servant, thereby bringing him into deadly danger. There are other ways such as conciliation, bribery and intrigue, by which friendship can be patched. As the proverb says:

No wisdom lies in fighting, since
It is the fools who fight;
The wise discover in the wise books
What course is wise and right,
And wise books in the course that is
Not violent, delight.

Where the palace harbors servants
Kindly, modest, pure,
Death to enemies, and deaf to
Avarice's lure,

Foes may struggle, but the royal
Honor is secure.

Therefore
Speak the truth, though harsh it be:
Blarney is true enmity.

Where royal servants, asked or not,
Indulge in pleasant lies
That lead the royal mind astray,
The royal glory dies.

Furthermore, counsellors should be consulted individually, but the master must then make his own decision regarding the bearing each one's advice has on the good of the kingdom. For it often happens that even an established fact may seem otherwise to one of wandering judgment. As the proverb says:

The firefly seems a fire, the sky looks flat;
Yet sky and fly are neither this nor that.
The true seem often false, the false seem true;
Appearances deceive, so think it through.

"Consequently, a master should not implicitly rely on the advice of a servant who lacks administrative sense. Nor should he rely on the words of rascally servants who for their own personal profit, present matters to the master in false light and with bewildering eloquence. A master should undertake a matter only after full reflection. As the proverb says:

Let fit and friendly counsel first,
And more than once, be heard;
Then ponder on the plan proposed

From first to final word;
Then act, and harvest fame and wealth,
Avoiding the absurd.

Thus ends Book I, titled "The Loss of Friends." The first verse runs:

The forest lion and the bull
Were linked in friendship, growing, full;
A jackal then estranged the friends
For greedy and malicious ends.



Principle

Let no master allow his mind to be unduly swayed by others' counsel. Let him always be mindful of the different motives and agenda that each person brings to the table. Let him fully consider the ultimate issue at hand and carefully contemplate the pros and cons of each counsel offered. Let him be the master, a wise master, the ultimate decision maker, ever cognizant of the multiform complexities of duty.

The loss of true friendship is a tragedy that should be avoided at all costs.

Story 1

Forethought, Readywit and Fatalist

In a great lake lived three full-grown fishes, whose names were Forethought, Readywit and Fatalist. One day, Forethought overheard fishermen on the bank saying, "There are plenty of fish in this pond. Tomorrow we shall go fishing."

On hearing this, Forethought reflected, "This doesn't bode well. Tomorrow or the day after they are sure to come here. I will take Readywit and Fatalist and move to another lake whose waters are not troubled." So he called them and asked them if they were willing to leave with him.

Readywit said, "There are sizable lakes elsewhere too. They may not come here after all. One should not abandon the lake of one's birth based merely on such gossip. The proverb says:

Since scamp and sneak and snake
So often undertake
A plan that does not thrive,
The world wags on, alive.

Therefore I am determined not to go." When Forethought realized that they had made up their minds, he went to another source of water all by himself.

The next day, the fishermen with their boys entered the lake, cast a net and caught all the fish without exception. Under these circumstances, Readywit, while still in the water, played dead. Since they thought, "This big fellow died without help,"

they drew him from the net and laid him on the bank, from which he wriggled back to safety in the water.

But Fatalist stuck his nose into the meshes of the net, struggling, until they pounded him repeatedly with clubs and so killed him.



Principle

To have friends who have forethought and who are resourceful, is a blessing. Never ignore their advice.

Story 2

The Duel between Elephant and Sparrow

In a dense jungle lived a sparrow and his wife who had built their nest on the branch of a tree. In due course of time, they had a family.

One day, a jungle elephant with fever was distressed by the heat and came beneath that tree in search of shade. Blinded by his fever, he pulled with the tip of his trunk at the branch where the sparrows had built their nest and broke it. In the process the sparrows' eggs were crushed, though the parent-birds, further life being predestined, narrowly escaped death.

The hen-sparrow was devastated and began to wail in lamentation. Hearing this, the woodpecker, a close friend of hers, said, "My dear friend, why lament in vain? For the scripture says,

For lost and dead and past
The wise have no laments:
Between the wise and fools
Is just this difference.

Since kinsmen's sticky tears
Clog the departed,
Bury them decently,
Tearless, whole-hearted.

"That is good theory," said the hen-sparrow, "but what of it?

This elephant, curse his fever, killed my babies. So if you are my friend, come up with a plan to kill this big elephant. If that were done, I should feel less grief at the death of my children. You know the saying:

While one brings comfort in distress,
Another jeers at pain;
By paying both as they deserve,
A man is born again."

"Madam," said the woodpecker, "your remark is very true. For the proverb says:

A friend in need is a friend indeed;
Fathers indeed are those who feed;
True comrades they, and wives indeed,
Whence trust and sweet content proceed.

"Now let us see what I can devise using my wit. I have another friend, a gnat called LuteBuzz. Let's seek her help so that this villainous beast of an elephant may be killed."

He went with the hen-sparrow, found the gnat and said, "This is my friend the hen-sparrow. She is in mourning because a villainous elephant smashed her eggs. You must lend your assistance while I work out a plan to kill him."

"My dear friend," said the gnat, "there is only one possible answer. I have an intimate friend, a frog named Cloud-Messenger. Let us call him into consultation. For the proverb says:

A wise companion find,
Shrewd, learned, righteous, kind;
For plans by him designed
Are never undermined."

All three went together and told Cloud-Messenger the entire story. The frog said, "That wretched elephant is doomed when pitted against a great throng so enraged! Gnat, you must go and buzz in his fevered ear, so that he may shut his eyes in delight on hearing your music. Then the woodpecker's bill will peck out his eyes. After that I will sit on the edge of a pit and croak. And he, being thirsty, will hear me and will approach me expecting to find a body of water. When he comes to the pit, he will fall in and perish."

Then they carried out the plan. The fevered elephant shut his eyes in delight at the song of the gnat, was blinded by the woodpecker, wandered thirst-smitten at noonday, followed the croak of the frog, came to a great pit, fell in and died.



Principle

The power of the mightiest is no match for the shrewd ways of a throng that is both intelligent and rightfully enraged.

Story 3

How the Crow-Hen Killed the Black Snake

In a certain region grew a great banyan tree. In it lived a crow and his wife, occupying a nest which they had built. But a black snake crawled through the hollow trunk and ate their chicks as soon as they were born. Yet for all his sorrow over this violence, the poor crow could not desert the old familiar banyan tree and seek another home. For

Three cannot be induced to go –
The deer, the cowardly man, the crow:
Three go when insult makes them pant –
The lion, hero, elephant.

At last the crow-hen fell at her husband's feet and said, "My dear love, a great many children of mine have been eaten by that awful snake. And grief for my beloved ones haunts me. We must move. Let us make our home in some other tree. For

No friend like health abounding;
And like disease, no foe;
No love like love of children;
Like hunger-pangs, no woe.

With fields o'erhanging rivers,
With wife on flirting bent,
Or in a house with serpents,
No man can be content.

We are living in deadly peril."

On hearing this the crow grew dreadfully depressed and said, "We have lived in this tree for a long time, my dear. We cannot desert it. I will come up with some shrewd means of bringing death upon this villainous and mighty foe."

"But," said his wife, "this is a terribly venomous snake. How will you hurt him?" And he replied, "My dear, even if I have not the power to hurt him myself, I do have friends who are learned, who have mastered the works on ethics. I will go to them for some shrewd advice of such nature that the villain will soon meet his doom."

After this indignant speech he went at once to another tree, under which lived a dear friend, a jackal. He courteously greeted the jackal, related all his sorrow and said, "My friend, what do you consider is the opportune thing to do under the circumstances? The killing of our children is sheer death to my wife and me."

"My friend," said the jackal, "I have thought the matter through. You should not move from your home. That villainous black snake's heartless cruelty will spell his doom. For

Of means to injure brutal foes
You do not need to think,
Since of themselves they fall, like trees
Upon the river's brink.

The jackal continued, "Go to some spot frequented by a great

monarch. There seize a golden necklace from any wealthy man who guards it carelessly. Deposit this in such a place that when it is recovered, the snake is sure to be killed."

So the crow and his wife flew off at random and the wife came upon a certain pond. As she looked about, she saw the women of a king's court playing in the water, and on the bank they had left behind golden chains, pearl necklaces, garments and gems. The crow-hen seized one gold necklace and flew back to the tree where she lived.

When the maids' servants caught sight of the theft, they picked up clubs and ran in pursuit. The crow-hen dropped the gold necklace in the snake's hole and waited at a safe distance.

When the king's men climbed the tree, they found a hole and in it a black snake with swelling hood. They killed him with their clubs, recovered the gold necklace and returned to the palace. Thereafter the crow and his wife lived in peace.



Principle

Where power and brute force fail, a shrewd plan may still prevail.

Story 4

The Plover Who Fought the Ocean

A plover and his wife once lived by the shore of a mighty sea. The sea teemed with life; with fish, crocodiles, turtles, sharks, porpoises, pearl oysters and shellfish. The plover's name was Sprawl and his wife was named Constance.

In time, she became pregnant and was ready to lay her eggs. She said to her husband, "Please find a spot where I may lay my eggs." "Why," he said, "this home of ours, inherited from our ancestors, promises progress. Lay your eggs here." "Oh," she said, "this is a dreadful place. The ocean is so near at hand. The tide might rise high some day and sweep away my babies."

The plover answered, "My beloved, the great ocean knows and recognizes me very well as his dear Sprawl. He will never show such enmity to me. Haven't you heard the saying?

What man is rash enough to take
The gleaming crest-jewel from a snake?
Or stirs the wrath of one so dread
His glance may strike his victim dead.

What son of man, with simple wit,
Defies the fire and enters it,
The smokeless flame that terrifies,
Whose tongues by hundreds lick the skies?"

Even as he spoke, his wife laughed outright since she knew the

full measure of his true capacity and said:

Your heavy boastings startle, shock,
And make of you a laughingstock:
Can the rabbit ever plant
A dung-pile like the elephant?

How can you fail to appreciate your own strength and weakness? There is a saying:

To know one's self is hard, to know
Wise effort, effort vain;
But accurate self-critics are
Secure in times of strain.

This much of effort brings success;
I have the power; I can:
So think, then act and reap the fruit
Of your judicious plan.

But the plover insisted on his superior powers and great relationship with the ocean. He said, "My dear, feel no anxiety. Who can bring humiliation upon you while my arms protect you?"

So Constance laid her eggs, but the ocean, who had listened to all this conversation thought, "Well, well! There is sense in the saying:

Of self-conceit all creatures show
An adequate supply:
The plover lies with claws up-stretched
To prop the falling sky.

I will now put his power to the test."

So the next day, when the two plovers had gone hunting for food, he made a long reach with his wave-hands and eagerly seized the eggs. When Constance returned and found the nursery empty, she said to her husband, "See what has happened to poor me! The ocean seized my eggs today. I told you more than once that we should move, but you were stupid and refused to go. I am now so despondent over the loss of my children that I have decided to jump into the fire and burn myself."

"My dear," said Sprawl, "wait until you witness my power. I shall dry up that rascally ocean with my bill." But she replied, "my dear husband, how can you fight the ocean? With a bill of that size, how can you dry up that mighty ocean into which flow the great rivers of the world?

Gay simpletons who fight,
Not estimating right
The foe's power and their own,
Like moths in flame atone."

"My dear," said the plover, "you should not say such things.

The sun's new-risen beams
Upon the mountains fall:
Where glory is cognate,
Age matters not at all.

Success is rooted in the will;
And I possess an iron-strong bill;
Long days and nights before me lie:
Why should not ocean's flood go dry?

The highest glory to attain
Asks enterprise and manly strain:
The sun must first to Libra climb
Before he routs the cloudy time.

With this bill, I shall single-handedly dry up the water to the last drop and turn the sea into dry land."

"Well," said his wife, "if you feel that you must wage war on the ocean, at least call other birds to your aid before you begin. For the proverb says:

A host where each is weak
Brings victory to pass:
The elephant is bound
By woven ropes of grass."

"Very well," said Sprawl. "I will assemble my friends and dry up the ocean." With this in mind, he summoned all the birds and related his grief at the destruction of his babies. And they started to beat the ocean with their wings, as a way to bring some relief to his sorrow.

One bird said, "Our desires will not be accomplished in this manner. Let us rather fill up the ocean with clods and dust." So they brought all the clods and dust they could carry in the hollow of their bills and started to fill up the ocean.

Another bird said, "It is plain that we are not equal to a contest with the mighty ocean. So let's approach the old gander who lives inside a banyan tree. He should be able to give us sound and practical advice."

So all the birds visited the old gander and related their grief over the loss of Sprawl's babies. The old gander said, "The king of all of us birds is the eagle Garuda, the vehicle of God

himself. Therefore the timely course of action is for all of you to approach him and to stir his feelings by a chorus of wailing lamentation. He will then remove our sorrow."

The birds then sought Garuda. While they were thus conferring, God sent his messenger to the eagle, ordering him to rush to the Lord's celestial city. On hearing this, Garuda proudly said to him, "The ocean, the resting place of our beloved Lord, has stolen the eggs of the plover, who is my servant. If I do not chastise him, then I would not be a servant of our master. Please report this to the master."

When God learned from the messenger's lips of Garuda's mission, he thought:

Masters, fully satisfied,
Pay by gratifying pride;
Servants, for such honor's pay,
Gladly throw their lives away."

Having reached this conclusion, he hastened to Garuda in person, to address his servant's needs. Garuda, upon seeing his master, bowed low and said, "O blessed one, the ocean, made insolent by his service to you as a resting place, has stolen the eggs of my servant and thus brought shame upon me. Out of sheer reverence for you, my Lord, I have refrained from taking action. But if nothing is done, I will myself reduce him to dry land. For the proverb says:

A loyal servant dies, but shrinks
From doing deeds of such a kind
As bring contempt from common men
And lower him in this master's mind."

To this the Lord replied, "O Garuda, your speech is justified.

Because

For servants' crimes the master should
Be made to suffer, say the good,
So long as he does not erase
From service, folk cruel and base.

Come then, so that we may recover the eggs from the ocean, may satisfy the plover and then proceed to our celestial city." To this Garuda agreed, and the Lord reproached the ocean, then fitted the fire-arrow to his bow and said, "Villain, give the plover his eggs. Else, I will reduce you to dry land."

On hearing this, the ocean, tremblingly took the eggs and restored them to the plover, as directed by the Lord.



Principle

The opponent's power must be reckoned carefully before plunging into a fight. It is crucial to understand the play of power politics in any situation. To fight the mighty, one must befriend and seek the help of one who is equal or superior in might.

He loses fights who fights before
His foeman's power is reckoned:
The ocean and the plover fought,
And ocean came out second."

Story 5

The Heron That Liked Crab-Meat

There was once a heron who lived on the edge of a pond. Being old, he sought an easy way of catching fish on which to live. He thus spent many a happy day. One day, that crane lingered at the edge of the pond, pretending to be quite irresolute, not catching even the fish within his reach. Among the fish lived a crab. He drew near and said, "Uncle, why do you neglect your usual meals and amusements today?" The heron replied, "So long as I kept fat and flourished by eating fish, I spent my time pleasantly. But a great disaster will soon befall you. As I am old, this will cut short the pleasant course of my life. That is why I feel depressed and am in no mood to eat these days."

"Uncle," said the crab, "what is the nature of this disaster?" The heron continued, "This morning I overheard the conversation of some fishermen near the pond. They remarked that this was a big pond, full of fish. They plan to cast a net tomorrow or the day after. This being the case, you will all soon be dead, my food supply will get cut off and in grieving over this thought, I am indifferent to food today."

When the water creatures heard the trickster's report, they all feared for their lives and implored the heron saying, "Uncle! Friend! Since you have brought us news of this calamity, you must also come up with a solution to save us from the jaws of death."

The heron replied, "I am a bird, not competent to contend with men. However, what I can do is to transfer you from this pond to another, a bottomless one." By this artful speech they were led astray such that they each clamoured, "Uncle! Friend! Take

me first! Me first!"

The old rascal laughed in his heart, and took counsel with his own mind, thus, "My shrewdness has brought these fishes into my power. I must now eat them to my heart's content." Having thus thought things through, he promised what the thronging fish implored, lifted some in his bill, carried them a certain distance to a slab of stone and ate them up there. Day after day he made the trip with supreme delight and satisfaction. By uttering lie after lie, he managed to keep the fishes' confidence.

One day the crab, disturbed by the fear of death, importuned him with the words, "Uncle, please save me too from the jaws of death." The heron reflected, "I am tired of eating fish. This crab should provide me with some tasty variety." He then picked up the crab and flew through the air.

The observant crab couldn't spot any water body along the way. The heron seemed ready to alight on a sun-scorched rock. The crab asked him, "Uncle, where is that bottomless pond that you were talking about?" To that the heron laughed and said, "Do you see that broad, sun-scorched rock? All the water dwellers have found repose there. It is now your turn to rest there."

The crab looked down and saw a great rock, full with heaps of fish skeletons. And he thought, "Ah me!

If you will, with serpents play;
Dwell with foeman who betray:
Shun your false and foolish friends,
Fickle, seeking vicious ends.

The crab then began to muse over an opportune course of action. He thought:

Fear fearful things, while yet
No fearful thing appears;

When danger must be met,
Strike, and forget your fears.

"Before he drops me there, I will catch his neck with all four claws," he concluded.

When he did so, the heron tried to escape, but being a fool, he was unable to fight off the crab's grip and had his head cut off.

The crab then painfully made his way back to the pond, dragging the heron's neck as if it were a lotus stalk. When the fish saw him, they asked, "Brother, why did you come back?" Showing the head of the heron to the fish, he said, "This rascal has enticed the unsuspecting water dwellers from every quarter, has deceived them with his lies, and then dropped them on a slab of rock not far away from here and eaten them. Fortunately for me, further life being predestined, I perceived that he destroyed those who trusted him and so have brought back his neck. Forget your worries. All the water dwellers shall now live in peace."



Principle

The brutal and heartless, overcome by greed, will bring upon themselves their own end.

Of means to injure brutal foes
You do not need to think,
Since of themselves they fall, like trees
Upon the river's brink.

A heron ate what fish he could,
The bad, indifferent, and good;
His greed was never satisfied
Till, strangled by a crab, he died.

Story 6

Shell-Neck, Slim and Grim

In a lake there once lived a turtle named Shell-Neck. He had these two friends who were ganders named Slim and Grim. The vicissitudes of nature plunged this region into a twelve-year drought. The ganders thought, "This lake has gone dry. Let us seek another body of water. However, we must first say farewell to Shell-Neck, our dear and long-standing friend."

When they did so, the turtle said, "Why do you bid me farewell? I am a water-dweller. I will soon perish from the scant supply of water and from grief over losing you. So if you feel any affection for me, please rescue me from the jaws of death. Besides, as the water dries in this lake, you two suffer nothing beyond a restricted diet, while to me it means immediate death. Isn't loss of life more serious than loss of food?"

The gander replied, "We are unable to take you with us since you are a water-creature without wings." Yet the turtle continued, "There is a possible device. Bring a stick of wood." This they did and the turtle gripped the middle of the stick between his teeth and said, "Now take firm hold with your bills, one on each side, fly up and travel with even flight through the sky, until we discover another desirable body of water."

"There is a hitch in this fine plan. If you happen to indulge in the smallest conversation, you will lose your hold on the stick, will fall from a great height and will be dashed to bits," they objected.

"Oh," said the turtle, "from this moment on I take a vow of silence, to last as long as we are in the sky." So they carried out

the plan, but while the two ganders were carefully carrying the turtle over a neighboring city, the people below noticed the spectacle and there arose a confused buzz of talk as they asked, "What is this cart-like object that two birds are carrying through the air above?"

Hearing this, the doomed turtle heedlessly asked, "What are these people chattering about?" The moment he spoke, the poor simpleton lost his grip and fell to the ground. And people who wanted turtle meat cut him to bits in a moment with sharp knives.



Principle

Always pay heed to sound advice from kind friends. Restraint in speech is a great virtue.

To take advice from kindly friends
Be ever satisfied:
The stupid turtle lost his grip
Upon the stick, and died.

Story 7

The Lion and the Carpenter

In a certain city there lived a carpenter named Trust-God. It was his constant habit to carry his lunch to the forest each day, where he cut large logs. In that forest, there lived a lion named Spotless, who had two carnivores working for him as lackeys - a jackal and a crow.

One day the lion was roaming the forest by himself and met the carpenter. The carpenter, on beholding the majestic lion, whether resigning to the fact that he was as good as dead or perhaps with the presence of mind to perceive that it was safer to face the powerful one directly, advanced to meet the lion. He bowed low and said, "Come friend, come! Today you must have lunch with me, your brother."

"My good fellow," said the lion, "being a carnivore, I do not live on rice. But in spite of that, I will taste some of your food since I have taken a liking for you. What delicacy has your wife prepared for me?"

The carpenter spread before the lion all kinds of rich dishes, flavored with sugar, butter, grape juice and spice. To show his gratitude, the lion guaranteed his safety and granted him unhindered passage through the forest. The carpenter replied, "Dear Majesty, you must come here every day but please come alone. Please do not bring any one else to visit me." In this manner they spent their days in friendship. Since the lion received such hospitality and such a variety of goodies every day, he gave up the practice of hunting.

As the result, the jackal and crow, who lived off others'

fortunes went hungry and they implored the lion. "Master," they said, "where do you go every day? And why do you come back so happy?" "I don't go anywhere," said he. When they pressed the question with great deference, the lion said, "A friend of mine comes into this forest every day. His wife cooks the most delicious dishes and I eat them every day in order to reciprocate the friendship that they have extended me."

The jackal and the crow said, "The two of us will go there, will kill the carpenter and we will have enough meat and blood to keep us fat for a long time." The lion retorted, "Look here! I guaranteed his safety. How can I even imagine playing such a mean trick on him? But I will request him to give a portion of his delicious food for the two of you also." To this they agreed.

So the three set out to find the carpenter. While they were still farther away, the carpenter caught a glimpse of the lion and his seedy companions and he thought, "This does not bode well for me." So he quickly climbed up a tree.

The lion reached the spot and said, "My good friend, why did you climb the tree when you saw me? I am your friend, Spotless, the lion. Do not be alarmed." The carpenter stayed where he was and said:

Your jackal does not reassure;
Your crow's sharp bill offends:
You therefore see me up a tree –
I do not like your friends.



Principle

Evil counsellors poison one's powers of reasoning and reflection. It is wise to stay away from friends who may be good-natured themselves but who unfortunately associate with evil-minded folks.

Story 8

The Shrewd Old Gander

In one part of a forest was a fig tree with massive branches. In it lived a flock of wild geese. At the root of this tree there appeared a creeping vine. The old gander said, "This vine that is climbing our fig tree bodes ill for us. Someone could use it to climb up here some day and kill us. Take it away while it is still slender and readily cut it." The younger geese despised his counsel and refused to cut the vine. In due course of time, it wound its way up the tree.

One day when the geese were away, a hunter climbed the fig tree by following the spiral vine. He laid a snare among the nests and went home. When the geese returned at nightfall, they were all caught. The old gander said, "Well, disaster has struck. You have brought this upon yourselves by not taking my advice. We will all be dead by the morning."

The geese then implored, "Sir, we feel terrible and are extremely sorry. Please tell us what we should do now." The old gander replied, "If you will take my advice, play dead when that hateful hunter comes. When the hunter, inferring that we are dead, throws the last one of us to the ground, we must all rise simultaneously, flying over his head."

At early dawn the hunter arrived and when he looked them over, everyone seemed good as dead. Therefore, perfectly assured, he freed them from the snare and threw them all to the ground, one after the other. But when they saw him preparing to descend, they all followed the shrewd plan of the old gander and flew up simultaneously.



Principle

The shrewd nip impending danger in the bud. Always take the counsel of those with more experience.

Story 9

The Lion and the Ram

In one part of a forest was a ram, separated from his flock. Armed with his great fleece and horns, he roamed the forest, considering himself a tough force to reckon with.

One day a lion in that forest, who had a retinue comprising all kinds of animals, encountered him. At this unprecedented sight, since the wool so bristled in every direction to conceal the ram's body, the lion's heart was troubled and filled with fear. "Surely, he is more powerful than I am," thought he. "That is why he wanders here so fearlessly." And the lion backed away.

A few days later the lion saw the same ram chewing grass on the forest floor and he thought, "What! This fellow nibbles grass! His strength must be proportionate to his diet." So he sprang quickly and killed the ram.



Principle

Discretion in attracting undue attention is especially recommended for the poor and weak.

The poor are in peculiar need
Of being secret when they feed:
The lion killed the ram who could
Not check his appetite for food.

Story 10

The Monk Who Left His Body Behind

In a city named Unassailable there ruled a king named Fine-Chariot. One day, a forest ranger came with this report, "Master, all the forest chieftains have become arrogant and destructive. Their chief is a king named Vindhyaka. You must show this king his rightful place."

On hearing this report the king summoned Counsellor Strong and dispatched him with orders to chastise the forest chieftains and their king.

After Counsellor Strong had left for the forest, a monk arrived in the city at the end of the hot season. He was master of the astronomical sciences. By displaying his deep knowledge of the mysteries of this subject, he won the admiration of the people of the city.

Finally, as his fame spread by word of mouth, the king heard about him and felt the curiosity to summon the monk to his palace. There he offered him a seat and asked, "Is it true Professor, as they say, that you read the thoughts of others?" "That will be demonstrated in the sequel to my current discourses," replied the monk, and he thus aroused in the poor king, burning curiosity.

One day he failed to appear at the regular hour, but the following day, on entering the palace, he announced, "O King, I bring you the best of good tidings. I am proud to announce that I just returned from heaven. At dawn today I flung this earthly body of mine aside within my cell, assumed a body fit for the world of gods, a heavenly body, and have just returned.

All the gods there requested me to pass on their best wishes to you."

When he heard this, the king said, his extreme curiosity giving way to a feeling of amazement, "What, Professor! You go to heaven?" "O mighty King," replied the fellow, "I go to heaven every day." This fantasy the king believed, poor dullard that he was, and grew negligent of all royal business and duties, directing all his attention then onwards to the monk.

In this scenario, Strong entered the king's presence, after settling all disturbances in the forest domain. He found the master wholly indifferent to all the counselors, withdrawn in private conference with that monk, discussing what seemed to be some miraculous occurrence, his lotus-face in bloom. On learning all that had transpired, Strong bowed low and said, "Victory, O King! May the gods give you wit and wisdom!"

The king then enquired after the counsellor's health and said, "Sir, do you know this professor?" To which Strong replied, "How could one be ignorant of one who is the lord and creator of a whole school of professors? Moreover, I have heard that this professor goes to heaven. Is that true?" "Everything that you have heard," answered the king, "is true beyond a shadow of doubt."

Then the monk said, "If this counsellor is curious, he may see for himself." With this he entered his cell, barred the door from within and waited there. After the lapse of a mere moment, the counsellor spoke, "O King," he said, "how soon will he return?" And the king replied, "Why this impatience? You must know that he leaves his lifeless body within this cell and visits heaven having assumed a heavenly body."

"If this is indeed the case," said Strong, "then bring a great quantity of firewood, so that I may set fire to this cell." "For what purpose?" asked the king. The counsellor continued, "So that, when this lifeless body has been burned, the gentleman

may stand before the king in that other heavenly body which visits heaven. What divinity there must be, in that special form!"

Having thus presented his case to the king, he set fire to the cell that contained the monk. And thus did he awaken the king to the evil ways of the monk.



Principle

Surrounding oneself with clever, trustworthy counsellors is critical for people in power.

The counsellor whose name was Strong
Attained his dearest heart's desire:
He won the favor of his king;
He burned the naked monk with fire.

Story 11

A Remedy Worse Than the Disease

A flock of herons once had their nests in a fig tree in one part of a forest. In a hole in that tree there lived a black snake who made a regular practice of eating the heron's chicks before their wings even emerged.

At last one heron, in utter woe at seeing the young ones eaten by a snake, went to the shore of the pond, shed a few tears and stood there with a downcast face. A crab who noticed him in this mood, asked, "Uncle, why are you so tearful today?" "My good friend," said the heron, "what am I to do? Fate is against me. My babies and the youngsters belonging to my relatives have been eaten by a snake that lives in a hole in the fig tree. Anguished at their grief, I weep. Tell me, is there any good way to kill him?"

On hearing this, the crab reflected, "After all, he is a natural-born enemy of my race. I will give him such advice, a kind of true lie, that the other herons may also perish. For the proverb says:

Let your speech like butter be;
Steel your heart remorselessly:
Stir an enemy to action
That destroys him with his faction."

And he said aloud, "Uncle, conditions being as they are, scatter bits of fish all the way from the mongoose's burrow to the snake's hole. The mongoose will then follow that trail and will

destroy the villainous snake."

When this had been done, the mongoose followed the bits of fish, killed the villainous snake and also ate at his leisure all the herons who made their home in the tree.



Principle

Careful thought must be given to the merits and demerits of any proposed scheme, before acting on it.

The good and bad of given schemes
Wise thought must first reveal:
The stupid heron saw the chicks
Provide a mongoose meal.

Story 12

Merchant Strong-Tooth

In a certain city there lived a merchant named Strong-Tooth who directed the entire administration. Such was his cleverness that all the city's inhabitants were satisfied with the way he handled the administrative affairs of the city. They understood the rarity of finding such a manager for they knew of the proverb,

Suppose he minds the king's affairs,
The common people hate him;
And if he plays the democrat,
The prince will execrate him:
So, since the struggling interests
Are wholly contradictory,
A manager is hard to find
Who gives them both the victory.

While he occupied this position, the merchant celebrated his daughter's wedding. At the wedding he invited all the townspeople and the king's entourage, gave a feast in their honour and lavished gifts upon them.

Now the king had a house-cleaning janitor named Bull. One day, in the presence of the royal chaplain, Bull sat on a seat in his house that was meant for the nobility. So Strong-Tooth fired him to show him his place. The humiliation so rankled in Bull's mind that he could not rest even at night.

He finally came upon a plan to get even with Strong-Tooth. One morning, as he was sweeping near the bed where the king lay half-awake, he said, "What impudence! Strong-Tooth kisses the queen." When the king heard this, he jumped off his bed and cried, "Come here Bull! Is what you were muttering true? Has the queen been kissed by Strong-Tooth?"

"O King", answered Bull, "I was awake all night because I am passionately fond of gambling. So sleep overpowered me even when I was busy with my sweeping. I do not know what I said."

The jealous king thought, "He is afraid to make a declaration, which is but natural. He has free entrance to my palace, as has Strong-Tooth. Perhaps he actually saw the fellow hugging the queen. For the proverb says:

Whatever a man desires, sees, does
In broad daylight,
Still mindful, he will say or do
Asleep at night.

Whatever secrets, good or ill,
Men in their bosoms keep,
Are soon betrayed when they are drunk
Or talking in their sleep.

In any case, what doubt can there be where a woman is concerned?

With one she tries the gossip's art;
Her glances with a second flirt;
She holds another in her heart:
Whom does she love enough to hurt?

The blunderhead who thinks:
'My love loves me,"
Is ever in her power;
A tame bird, he."

After all this lamentation he fired Strong-Tooth and forbade him from entering the court.

When Strong-Tooth realized that the king had withdrawn favors from him, he cried, "I have never committed an unfriendly act against the king even in a dream or by mere words. There is truth in the proverb:

Who ever saw or heard
A gambler's truthful word,
A neat and clean crow,
A woman going slow in love,
A kindly snake,
A eunuch's pluck awake,
A drunkard's love of science,
A king in friends' alliance?"

Now one day Bull, the sweeper, saw Strong-Tooth at the palace gate. Laughing aloud, he told the doorkeepers, "Be careful doorkeepers! This fellow Strong-Tooth has been spoiled by the king's favors and he dispenses arrests freely to lowly fellows like us. If you stop him, you will get a cuffing just like me."

Strong-Tooth was quick to realize that it was all Bull's doing. He reflected on the saying:

Though foolish, base, and lacking pride,
A servant at the monarch's side
Will have his honor satisfied.

Though fashioned on a cowardly plan
And mean, a royal servant can
Resent affronts from any man.

He returned home, abashed and deeply stirred. He summoned Bull in the evening, gave him two garments as an honorable present and said, "My good fellow, I did not drive you out by order of the king. It was because I saw you, in the chaplain's presence, sitting where you did not belong, that I humiliated you."

Now Bull received the two garments as if they were the Kingdom of Heaven, and feeling intense satisfaction, he said: "Friend merchant, I forgive you. You will soon see the reward of the honor shown me, in the form of favors from the king." With this he departed in glee. For there is wisdom in the saying:

A little thing will lift him high,
A little make him fall:
'Twixt balance-beam and scamp there is
No difference at all.

The next day, Bull entered the palace and did his sweeping. While the king lay half awake, he said, "What intelligence! Our king eats a cucumber while he uses the toilet."

On hearing this, the king rose in amazement and said, "Bull, what rubbish is this? If you weren't house-servant here, I would kill you! Why do you utter such nonsense?"

"O King," said Bull, "I was awake all night because I am passionately fond of gambling. So drowsiness overcame me in the very act of my sweeping. I do not know what I was muttering. Pardon me, master. I was really asleep."

Then the king thought: "Since this blockhead has uttered unimaginable nonsense about me, it must be the same with

Strong-Tooth. I made a mistake in taking away poor Strong-Tooth's honors from him. In his absence, the city's business has suffered so badly."

After thus considering the matter from every point of view, he summoned Strong-Tooth, presented him with gems and garments and reinstated him.



Principle

One should be careful not to incur the wrath of those who have easy access to the king/boss.

Whoever is too haughty to
Pay king's retainers honor due,
Will find his feet are tottering –
So merchant Strong-Tooth with the king.

Story 13

The Results of Education

On one part of a mountain a hen-parrot once gave birth to two chicks. These chicks were caught by a hunter when the mother had left the nest to search for food. One of them, since fate decreed it, contrived to escape, while the other was kept in a cage by the hunters and taught to speak. The first chick that escaped, encountered a wandering holy man, who caught him, took him to his own hermitage, and gave him kindly care.

While time passed in this manner, a certain king, whose horse ran away and separated him from his guard, came to that part of the forest where the hunters lived. The moment he perceived the approaching king, the parrot began to chuckle in his cage, "Come, come my masters! Here comes somebody riding a horse. Bind him, Bind him! Kill him, Kill him!" When the king heard the parrot's words he quickly turned his horse in another direction and sped away.

When the king came to another wood far away, he saw a hermitage of holy men and in it, a parrot who addressed him from a cage, "Enter, O King and find repose. Taste our cool water and our sweet fruit. Come, hermits! Pay him honor. Give him water to wash his feet in the cool shade of this tree."

When he heard this, the king's eyes opened wide and he pondered in wonder what it could mean. He said to the parrot, "In another part of the forest I met another parrot who looked like you but who had a cruel disposition. He yelled out for me to be bound and killed." The parrot narrated to the king the turn of events in his life. He concluded saying,

"Two birds were we. I and the other
One father had; we had one mother.
But, I was taught by hermits, while
Beef-eaters' speech, O King, he heard;
I listened to the hermits' word.
Our education, good and bad,
The obvious consequences had."



Principle

Character depends on one's upbringing and not one's birth.

Story 14

Smart, The Jackal

In one part of a forest lived a lion named ThunderFang, in the company of three counsellors, namely a wolf, a jackal and a camel, whose names were Meat-Face, Smart and Spike-Ear. One day he fought with a furious elephant whose sharp-pointed tusk so tore his body that he was forced to withdraw into his den.

Languishing from a seven-day fast, his body lean with hunger, he said to his famished advisors, "Round up some creature in the forest, so that, even in my present condition, I may provide you with the needed nourishment." The moment he issued his orders, they roamed the forest, but found nothing.

Smart reflected, "If Spike-Ear were killed, that would nourish us for a few days. However, the master would never agree to that, given how much he loves him. In spite of that, I shall use my wit to change the master's frame of mind to kill him. For, indeed,

All understanding may be won,
All things be slain, and all be done,
If mortals have sufficient wit;
For me, I make good use of it."

Having reflected thus, he said to Spike-Ear, "Friend Spike-Ear, the master lacks wholesome food and is starving. If the master goes, our death becomes certain. So I have a suggestion for your benefit and the master's. Please pay attention." "My good

fellow," said Spike-Ear, "please make haste to inform me, so that I may unhesitatingly do as you say. Besides, one earns credit for a hundred good deeds by serving his master."

To this Smart said, "My good fellow, give your own body at 100% interest, so that you may receive a double body, and the master may prolong his life." On hearing this proposal, Spike-Ear said, "If that is possible, my friend, my body shall be so devoted. Tell the master that this will be done. My only stipulation is that the Death-God should guarantee his side of the bargain."

Having made their decision, they all went to visit the lion and Smart said, "O King, we did not find a thing to eat today and the blessed sun has almost set." On hearing this the lion grew deeply despondent. Smart continued, "O King, our friend Spike-Ear makes this proposal, "If you call upon the Death-God to guarantee the bargain, and if you render it back with 100% interest, then I will give my body." "My good fellow," answered the lion, "yours is a beautiful act. Let it be as you say." On the basis of this pact, Spike-Ear was struck down by the lion's paw, his body was torn by the wolf and the jackal, and he died.

Then Smart reflected, "How can I get him all to myself to eat?" With this thought in his mind, he noticed that the lion's body was smeared with blood and he said, "Master, you must go to the river to bathe and worship the gods, while I stay here with Meat-Face to guard the food-supply." The lion agreed and went to the river.

When the lion was gone, Smart said to Meat-Face, "Friend Meat-Face, you are starving. You may eat some of this camel before the old master returns. I will make your apologies to the master." So Meat-Face took the hint, but had only just tasted it when Smart cried, "Drop it, Meat-Face. The Master is coming."

Presently the lion returned, saw that the camel was minus the

heart and roared with wrath, "Look here! Who turned this camel into leftovers? I wish to kill him!" Then Meat-Face gave Smart an imploring look, as if to say, "Come now! Say something so that he may calm down." But Smart laughed and said, "Come on! You ate the camel's heart all by yourself. Why do you look at me?" Meat-Face, hearing this, fled for his life and ran away. The lion pursued him a short distance but then turned back thinking, "He belongs to the same family as me. I must not kill him."

At this moment, as fate would have it, there came that way a great camel caravan, heavily laden, making a tremendous jingling noise with the bells tied to the camel's necks. When the lion heard the jingle of the bells, loud even in the distance, he said to the jackal, "My good fellow, find out what this horrible noise may be."

On receiving this commission, Smart advanced a little in the forest, then darted back and cried in great excitement, "Run, master! Run, if you can run!"

"My good fellow," said the lion, "why terrify me so? Tell me what it is." Smart cried, "Master, the Death-God is coming and is filled with rage against you since you brought untimely death upon the camel and had him guarantee the bargain. He intends to make you pay a thousand fold for the camel. He takes immense pride in his camels. He is coming and he is coming fast!"

When the lion heard this, he too, abandoned the dead camel and scampered for dear life. Whereupon Smart ate the camel bit by bit, relishing the meat for a long time.



Principle

Thoughtful, meticulous planning goes a long way. Well-devised plans, especially when they are selfish in intent, should be kept close-guarded secrets.

The wise who wrongs another,
Pursuing selfish good,
Should keep his plans a secret,
As Smart did in the wood

Story 15

Leap and Creep

In the palace of a certain king stood a wonderful bed that was comfortable, ornate and filled with all imaginable luxuries. In a corner of the bedspread lived a female louse named Creep. Surrounded by a thriving family of sons, daughters, grandchildren and other descendants, she drank the king's blood as he slept. On this diet she grew plump and enjoyed good health.

While she was living there in this manner, a flea named Leap drifted in one day and dropped on the bed. This flea felt supreme satisfaction on examining the softness of the bed. Charmed by the sheer delight of touching it, he hopped this way and that until, as fate had willed it, he met Creep, who said to him, "Where do you come from? This is a dwelling fit for a king. Be gone and lose no time about it." "Madam," said he, "you should not say such things. For, now I am your guest. I have of late sampled the blood of all kinds of men but found it acidic, slimy and quite unwholesome. On the contrary, he who reposes on this bed must have a delightful vital fluid, just like nectar. It must be enriched by meats, unctuous, tender, and melting in the mouth; meats prepared from the flesh of the choicest creatures of land, water and air and seasoned with sugar, pomegranate, ginger and pepper. To me it seems an elixir of life. Therefore, with your kind permission, I plan to taste this sweet and fragrant substance, thus combining pleasure and profit."

"No," said she. "For fiery-mouthed stingers like you, it is out of the question. Leave this bed. You know the proverb:

The fool who does not know
His own resource, his foe,
His duty, time and place,
Who sets a reckless pace,
Will by the wayside fall,
Will reap no fruit at all."

But the flea fell at her feet, repeating his request. And she finally agreed since she was basically of a courteous disposition. However she warned, "You must not come to dinner at a wrong place or time." "Being a new comer, please guide me on what the right place and right time is," he said. She replied, "When the king's body is overcome by wine, fatigue or sleep, then you may quietly bite him on the feet. This is the right place and the right time." To these conditions he gave his assent.

In spite of this arrangement, when the king had just dozed off in the early evening, the famished bungler bit him on the back. And the poor king as if stung by a scorpion, sprang to his feet, scratched his back and cried to a servant: "Rascal, somebody bit me. You must hunt through this bed until you find the insect."

Leap heard the king's command and in terrified haste crept into a crevice in the bed. The king's servants entered and following their master's orders, brought a lamp and made a minute inspection. As fate would have it, they came upon Creep as she crouched in the fold of the fabric and killed her and her entire family.



Principle

Beware of sharing your house with a stranger

Story 16

Passion and the Owl

Within a certain forest was a broad expanse of lake. There lived a king-swan named Passion, who spent his days engaged in a variety of pastimes. One day, Death visited him in the person of an owl. And the swan said, "This is a lonely wood. Where do you come from?" The owl replied, "I came because I heard of your virtues. For:

That I must cling in friendship
To you, is sure:
The impure turns, attaining
The Ganges, pure.

The swan gave his assent with the words, "My excellent friend, dwell with me as you like by this broad lake in this pleasant wood." So their time was spent in pleasant friendship.

One day the owl said, "I am returning to my own home which is called Lotus Grove. If you value our friendship and feel affection in your heart for me, please do not fail to pay me a visit as my guest." With these words he went home.

As time passed, the swan thought to himself, "I have grown old, living in this spot and I do not know a single other region where I could dwell. I shall visit my friend, the owl. The change of place and food should do me good.

Reflecting thus, he went to visit the owl. At first, he could not find him in Lotus Grove. After a more thorough search he

found the poor owl crouching in an ugly hole, for he was blind in the daytime. Passion called, "My dear friend, please come out. This is your dear friend the swan. I have come to pay you a visit."

The owl replied, "I do not stir by day. Let's meet after sundown." So the swan waited a long time, met the owl at night, updated him with all that had transpired in his life since they last met and finally fell asleep on the spot.

It so happened that a large commercial caravan had encamped at that very lake. At dawn the leader rose and gave the signal for departure using a loud horn. The owl recognized this, answered with a harsh hoot and dived into a hold in the river bank. The swan did not stir. The leader took the shrill hoot to be an evil omen and felt disturbed. He gave orders to an archer to aim by sound. The archer strung his powerful bow, drew an arrow and killed the swan who was resting near the owl's nest.



Principle

Trusting a false friend who is by nature selfish, can cause much harm

Harsh talk, untimely action,
False friends – are worse than vain:
The swan in lilies sleeping,
Was by the arrow slain.

Story 17

Numskull and the Rabbit

In one part of a forest, there lived a lion named Numskull who was drunk with pride. He slaughtered animals without any remorse. If he saw an animal, he could not spare him.

So all the natives of the forest, deer, boars, buffaloes, wild oxen, rabbits and others came together and with faces filled with despair, bowed heads and bent knees, they beseeched the king of beasts, "O King, please put an end to this merciless, meaningless slaughter of all creatures. It could cost you your happiness in the next world. For the scripture says:

A thousand future lives
Will pass in wretchedness
For sins a fool commits
His present life to bless.

The ungrateful body, frail
And rank with filth within,
Is such that only fools
For its sake sink in sin.

Please stop slaughtering our generations. If the master remains at home, we will of our own volition send him one animal of the forest each day, for his food. In this way, neither the royal sustenance nor our families will suffer. This will only bring more glory to you as a king. For the proverb says:

The king who tastes his kingdom like
Elixir, bit by bit,
Who does not overtax its life,
Will fully relish it.

The king who madly butchers men,
Their lives as little reckoned
As lives of goats, has one square meal,
But never has a second.

A king desiring profit, guards
His world from evil chance;
With gifts and honors waters it
As florists water plants.

Guard subjects like a cow, nor ask
For milk each passing hour;
A vine must first be sprinkled, then
It ripens fruit and flower.

A seedling is a tender thing,
And yet, if not neglected,
It comes in time to bearing fruit:
So subjects well protected.

Their subjects form the only source
From which accrue to kings
Their gold, grain, gems and varied drinks,
And many other things."

After listening to this carefully, Numskull said, "Well, gentlemen, you are quite convincing. But if an animal does not

come to me every day as I sit here, I promise you I will eat you all." To this they agreed with much relief. They then began to roam the forest fearlessly. Each day at noon one of them appeared as his dinner, each species taking its turn and providing an individual grown old, or religious, or grief-smitten, or fearful of the loss of son or wife.

One day a rabbit's turn came, it being rabbit-day. When all the animals gathered together had given him directions, he reflected: "Curse this lion! There must be some way to kill him. After all:

In what can wisdom not prevail?
In what can resolution fail?
What cannot flattery subdue?
What cannot enterprise put through?

Yes, I can kill even a lion!"

So he proceeded very slowly, planning to arrive tardily, meditating all the while with troubled spirit on a means of killing him. Late in the day he came into the presence of the lion, who was dying from hunger due to the delay and who angrily thought to himself, "I must kill all the animals, first thing in the morning."

While the lion was thus engrossed in thought, the rabbit slowly drew near, bowed low and stood before him. When the lion saw that he was tardy and also too small for a meal, he seethed with anger and taunted the rabbit saying, "You idiot! First, you are too small for a meal. Second, you are tardy. Because of this wickedness I am going to kill you and tomorrow morning I shall destroy every species of animal."

The rabbit bowed low and said with deference, "Master, neither am I nor are the other animals wicked. Please hear the real cause for my tardiness." The lion answered, "Well, tell it quick,

before you get destroyed within my jaws."

"Master," said the rabbit, "all the animals recognized today that it was the turn of the rabbits. Since I am quite small, they dispatched me with five other rabbits. In mid-journey, there issued from a great hole in the ground a lion who said: "Where are you bound?" I said, "We are traveling to become dinner to our master, lion Numskull, according to an agreement." "Is that so?" he asked. "This forest belongs to me. So all the animals, without exception, must deal with ME first! This Numskull is a sneak and a thief. Call him and bring him here at once. Then whichever of us emerges stronger in a duel shall be king and shall eat all these animals." At his command, master, I have come to you. This is the cause of my tardiness. As for the rest, my master is the sole judge.

After listening to this, Numskull said, "Well, well, my good fellow, show me that sneak thief of a lion and be quick about it. I cannot find peace of mind until I have vented my anger on him. He should have remembered the saying:

Where no great reward is won,
Where defeat is nearly sure,
Never stir a quarrel, but
Find it wiser to endure."

"Quite so, master," said the rabbit." Warriors fight for their country when they are insulted. But this fellow resides in a fortress. We saw him emerge from his fortress when he held us up. And an enemy in a fortress is hard to handle. As the saying goes:

A single royal fortress adds
More military force
Than do a thousand elephants,
A hundred thousand horse.

The God of war decreed that any king
Who built a fortress sound,
Should conquer foemen. This is why
Such fortresses abound."

When he heard this, Numskull said, "My good fellow, show me that thief. Even if he is hiding in a fortress, I will kill him. For the proverb says:

The strongest man who fails to crush
At birth, disease or foe,
Will later be destroyed by that
Which he permits to grow."

"Very true," said the rabbit. "But after all it was a mighty lion that I saw. So the master should not set out without realizing the enemy's capacity. As the saying runs:

A warrior failing to assess
Two sides, in mad desire
For battle, plunges like a moth
Head foremost into fire."

Numskull said, "Enough! Show him to me, even in his fortress." "Very well," said the rabbit. "Follow me, master." And he led the way to a well, where he said to the lion, "Master, who can endure your majesty? The moment he saw you, that thief crawled right into his hole. Come, I will show him to you." "Be quick about it, my good fellow," said Numskull.

So the rabbit showed him the well. And the lion, being a great fool, saw his own reflection in the water and gave a loud roar. Then from the well issued a roar twice as loud, from the echo. When the lion heard this, he decided that his rival was very

powerful, hurled himself down and met his death.

The rabbit cheerfully carried the glad news to all the animals, received their compliments and lived in contentment in the forest.



Principle

There is nothing in the world that intelligence and resolute action cannot achieve. Playing upon the pride of the foolish is a good way to bring their downfall.

Some men permit a petty foe
Through purblind heedlessness to grow,
Till he who played a petty role
Grows, like disease, beyond control.

Intelligence is power. But where
Could power and folly make a pair?
The rabbit played upon his pride
To fool him; and the lion died.

Story 18

The Blue Jackal

There was once a jackal named Fierce-Howl who lived in a cave near the suburbs of a city. One day he was hunting for food, his body pinched with hunger, and wandered into the city after nightfall. There the city dogs snapped at his limbs with their sharp-pointed teeth and terrified his heart with their dreadful barking. He tried his best to escape and finally entered the house of a clothes dyer. There he tumbled into a tremendous indigo vat and all the dogs went home.

Presently the jackal, further life being predestined, managed to crawl out of the indigo vat and escaped into the forest. There all the animals thronging in his vicinity caught a glimpse of his body dyed with the juice of indigo and cried, "What is this creature enriched with that unprecedented color?" They fled, their eyes filled with terror and spread the report, "Oh no! Here is an exotic creature that has dropped from somewhere. Nobody knows what harm he is capable of inflicting on us. We shall stay away from him." For the proverb says:

Where you do not know
Conduct, stock and pluck,
'Tis not wise to trust,
If you wish for luck."

Now Fierce-Howl perceived their dismay and called to them, "Come, come, please don't flee from me. The Gods have appointed me the king of this forest since you have no monarch to look after you. You may all rest in safety under my rule."

On hearing this, the lions, tigers, leopards, monkeys, rabbits, gazelles, jackals and other species of wild life bowed humbly, saying, "Master, prescribe to us our duties." He then appointed the lion prime minister and assigned suitable roles to the tiger, leopard, elephant and monkey. But to all the jackals, his own kindred, he administered a cuffing and drove them away. Thus he enjoyed kingly glory, while lions and others killed animals for food and laid them before him. These he divided and distributed to all in a manner that befitted kings.

As time passed by, he was sitting one day in his court when he heard the sound made by a pack of jackals howling nearby. At this his body thrilled, his eyes filled with tears of joy and longing, he leaped to his feet and began to howl in a piercing tone. When the lions and others heard this, they perceived that he was a jackal. Their faces downcast, they said, "Look! We have been deceived by this jackal. Let the fellow be killed." When Fierce-Howl heard this, he tried to flee but was torn to bits by a tiger and died.



Principle

Neglecting one's own kith and kin to befriend strangers can be ruinous. It is dangerous to abandon one's true nature. And if one does abandon one's true nature, he must exercise discretion in word and deed to protect the camouflage.

Whoever leaves his friends,
Strange folk to cherish,
Like Fierce-Howl, will
Ultimately perish.

Story 19

The Ungrateful Man

In a certain town there lived a poor man whose name was Sacrifice. Every day his wife, tired of their poverty, would say to him, "Please work harder Sacrifice! Lazy-bones! Stone-hearted One! Don't you see your children starving? Go somewhere, find a way to make some money and bring home some food!"

At last, weary of this refrain, the man undertook a long journey and within a few days entered a great forest. While wandering hungry in this forest, he began to hunt for water. In a certain spot he came upon a well, overgrown with grass. When he looked in, he saw a tiger, a monkey, a snake and a man at the bottom. They also saw him.

The tiger cried out, "O noble soul, there is great virtue in saving life. Think of that and pull me out so that I may live in the company of beloved friends, wife, sons and relatives."

"Why," said Sacrifice, "the very sound of your name sends shivers down my spine. I cannot deny that I fear you. The tiger continued:

'For ingratitude alone
No expatiation will atone.

I bind myself by a triple oath that no danger threatens you from me. Have pity and pull me out. I will be grateful to you forever." Sacrifice thought this through and concluded, "If disaster befalls in saving this life, it is a disaster that spells salvation." So he pulled the tiger out.

Next the monkey said, "Sir, please pull me out too." Then the snake said, "Please pull me out too." Sacrifice pulled both of them out. Once they were out, the animals said, "The man down there is very evil. Beware. Do not pull him out. Do not trust him."

The tiger said, "Do you see this mountain with many peaks? My cave is in a wooded ravine on the northern slope. You must do me the favor of paying me a visit there someday, so that I may return your kindness." And with these words, he set off for his cave.

Then the monkey said, "My home is quite near the cave, beside the waterfall. Please pay me a visit there." With this he departed.

Then the snake said, "In any emergency, please remember me." And he went his way.

The man in the well began shouting, "Sir, please pull me out too!" At last Sacrifice was filled with so much pity for the man that he pulled him out, thinking, "He is after all a man like me." On coming out, the man said, "I am a goldsmith. If you ever possess gold that needs to be worked into shape, you must bring it to me." With that, he left for his home.

Sacrifice then continued his wanderings but found no means to procure food for his family. He was tired and hungry. He then recalled the monkey's invitation. The monkey received him at his home with great warmth and served him with fruits sweet as nectar. He said, "If you ever have use for fruit, please come here at any time." Sacrifice felt refreshed and said, "You have repaid my kindness fully. Please introduce me to the tiger." So the monkey led the way and introduced him to the tiger.

The tiger recognized him immediately and by way of returning his kindness, bestowed on him a necklace and other ornaments of gold, saying, "A certain prince whose horse ran away with him had come here alone and when he was within range of a spring, I killed him. I took all this from the prince and have

stored them carefully for you. Please accept these gifts."

Sacrifice took them and thought it would be a good idea to now visit the goldsmith. "He will do me a favor and get these sold," he thought. When the goldsmith saw him, he greeted him with hospitality, offered him food and water and asked, "Command me sir. What may I do for you?" Sacrifice said, "I have brought you gold. Please sell it for me."

When the goldsmith saw the gold, he thought to himself, "I worked this gold for the prince." Turning to Sacrifice he said "Please stay right here while I show this to somebody." He then left for the court to show it to the king. On seeing it the king asked, "Where did you get this?" And the goldsmith replied, "In my house is a guest named Sacrifice. He brought it."

The king then reflected, "Without question, that villain killed my son. I will teach him a lesson." He issued orders to the police, "Chain the man and execute him tomorrow morning."

When Sacrifice was chained, he remembered the advice the animals had given him but it was too late now. He then remembered the snake. The snake appeared at once and asked, "What can I do to serve you?" Free me from these fetters," said Sacrifice. The snake replied, "I will bite the king's dear queen. She will remain poisoned despite all the medicines and antidotes offered by the physicians. Only by the touch of your hand will the poison be neutralized. They will then free you."

Having made this promise, the snake bit the queen, whereupon shouts of despair arose in the palace and the entire city was filled with dismay. The king summoned several antidotes, conjurers, scientists, druggists and foreigners, all of who treated the case to the best of their abilities. However, none could neutralize the poison. Finally, a proclamation was made with drum beats, upon hearing which Sacrifice said, "I will cure her." The moment he spoke, he was freed from his chains and taken to the king. The king said, "Do whatever it takes to cure her." When taken to the queen, Sacrifice was able to cure her with

the mere touch of a hand.

When the king saw her restored to life, he paid Sacrifice honor and reverence and respectfully asked him, "Reveal the truth Sir. How did you come across this gold?" Sacrifice then related the entire story. As soon as the king comprehended the facts, he arrested the goldsmith and gave Sacrifice a thousand villages and appointed him his counsellor. Sacrifice summoned his family to the palace and lived happily ever after.



Principle

Never fail to heed the sound advice of good friends.

What tiger, monkey, snake advised,
I did not do; and so
That dreadfully ungrateful man
Has brought me very low.

Story 20

Ugly's Trust Abused

In a city there once lived a merchant named Ocean, who loaded a hundred camels with valuable cloth and set out in a certain direction.

As they entered a forest, one of his camels, named Ugly, was overburdened, fell limp and was unable to proceed further. The merchant therefore transferred Ugly's load onto the other camels, unyoked Ugly and proceeded, leaving him behind.

When the merchant was gone, Ugly hobbled about and began to eat the grass in the forest. In a few days, he regained his strength.

In that forest lived a lion named Haughty, whose friends were a leopard, a crow and a jackal. All three were dependent on the lion for food and spent their time simply flattering Haughty and lazing around. As they roamed the forest, they encountered the abandoned camel and the lion said, after observing his fantastic and comical shape, "This is an exotic creature. Who is he?" So the crow informed him of the facts and said, "This is what goes by the name of 'camel' in the world." The lion then asked him, "My good friend, where did you come from?" The camel narrated his tale and described his separation from the merchant. The lion was filled with compassion and guaranteed his personal security.

One day the lion fought an elephant, got attacked by the elephant's tusk and was forced to remain in his cave all day. When five or six days had thus passed, all the others found themselves in great distress from being unable to procure food.

Observing how his friends drooped, the lion said, "I am badly crippled by this wound and will be unable to hunt food for you. You will have to make an effort on your own."

To this they replied, "Why should we care to thrive when our lord is in this state?" "Bravo!" smiled the lion. "You display the conduct and devotion that befits good servants. Round up some animal food for me while I am in this condition. When they gave no answer, he said to them, "Come! Do not be bashful. Hunt out some creature. Even in my present condition I will convert it into food for you and myself."

So the four started to roam the forest. Since they found no animal, the crow and the jackal conferred together, and the jackal said, "Friend crow, why roam about? Here is Ugly, who trusts our king. Let us provide for our sustenance by killing him."

"A very good suggestion," said the crow. "But the master has guaranteed his personal security and will never kill him."

"Quite so," said the jackal. "I will interview the master and make him think of killing Ugly. "Stay right here until I go home and return with the master's answer." With this he hastened to the master.

When he found the lion, he said, "Master, we have roamed the entire forest and are now too famished to stir a foot. Besides, the king is on a diet. So if the king commands, one might fortify one's health today by means of Ugly's flesh."

When the lion had listened to this ruthless proposal, he cried out angrily, "Shame upon you, most degraded of sinners! If you dare to repeat those words, I will strike you dead. I have guaranteed his personal security. Don't you know the saying:

The wise declare and understand
No gift of cow or food or land
To be among all gifts as grand
As safety granted on demand."

"Master," replied the jackal, "if you kill him after guaranteeing his safety, then you indeed deserve blame. If, however, of his own accord he devotedly offers his own life to his lord and king, then no blame can touch you. So you may kill him on condition that he voluntarily commits himself to slaughter. Otherwise, you may eat any of the rest of us. For if the king is on a diet, and if food fails, he will experience a change for the worse. In that case, what value will these lives of ours contain, which will no longer be spent in our master's service? If anything disagreeable happens to our gracious master, then we must follow him into the fire. For the proverb says:

Save the chieftain of the clan,
Whatsoever the pain;
Lose him, and the clan is lost:
Hubless spokes are vain."

After listening to this, Haughty said, "Very well. Do as you will."

With this message, the jackal hastened to say to the others, "Well, friends, the master is very low. The life is oozing from the tip of his nose. If he goes, who will be our protector in this forest? Since starvation is driving him towards the other world, let us go and voluntarily offer our own bodies. Thus we shall pay the debt we owe our gracious master."

So they all went, their eyes brimming with tears, bowed low before Haughty, and sat down.

On seeing them, Haughty said, "My friends, did you catch any creature or even see any?" And the crow replied, "Master, though we roamed everywhere, we still did not catch any creature nor see any. Master, please eat me and support your life for a day. Thus the master will be satisfied and I shall rise to heaven. For the saying goes:

A servant who, in loyal love,
Has yielded up his breath,
Adorns a lofty seat in heaven,
Secure from age and death."

On hearing this, the jackal said, "Your body is small. If he ate you, the master would scarcely prolong his life. You have shown your loyalty and have won a saintly reputation in both worlds. Now make way, while I address the master." So the jackal bowed respectfully and said, "Master, please use my body to support your life today, thus conferring on me the best of earth and heaven."

Hearing this, the leopard said, "Very praiseworthy indeed, my friend. You have shown yourself a loyal servant. However, your body is rather small too. Make way, so that I too may win the master's grace." Then the leopard bowed low and said, "Master, please prolong your life for a day at the cost of my life. Grant me an everlasting home in heaven and spread my fame afar on earth.

Hearing this, poor Ugly thought, "Well, they used the most elegant phrases. Yet the master did not kill a single one of them. So I too will make a speech befitting the occasion. I have no doubt that all three will contradict me."

Having come to this conclusion, he said, "Very admirable, friend leopard. You hail from the same family as the king. How then can the master eat you? Make way so that I may address the master."

So poor Ugly bowed low and said, "Master, these you surely may not eat. Please prolong your life by means of my life, so that I may win the best of earth and heaven. For the proverb says:

No sacrificer and no saint
Can ever rise as high
As do the simple serving folk
Who for the master die."

Hereupon the lion gave the word, the leopard and the jackal tore his body, the crow pecked out his eyes and poor Ugly was ravenously devoured by them all.



Principle

Strained circumstances combined with wrong advice can cause even the learned and righteous to succumb to wrong action. Those in power must exercise great circumspection before giving marching orders of execution.

All who live upon their wits,
Many learned, too, are mean,
Do the wrong as quick as right:
Illustration may be seen
In the well-known tale that features
Camel, crow, and other creatures.

Story 21

The Monkey Who Could Not Be Taught

In one part of a forest was a troop of monkeys who found a firefly one winter evening when they were dreadfully depressed. On examining the insect, they believed it to be fire, so lifted it with care, covered it with dry grass and leaves, thrust forward their arms, sides, stomachs and chests, scratched themselves and enjoyed imagining that they were warm. One of them in particular, feeling especially cold, blew repeatedly and with concentrated attention on the firefly.

At that point, a bird named Needle-Face, driven by hostile fate to her own destruction, flew down from her tree and said to the monkey, "My dear sir, do not put yourself to unnecessary trouble. This is not fire. This is a firefly." He, however, did not heed her warning but blew again, nor did he stop when she tried more than once to check him. When Needle-Face continued to vex him by coming close and shouting in his ear, in anger he seized her and dashed her on a rock, crushing face, eyes, head and neck so that she died.



Principle

Never offer advice unasked to those who are obstinate and foolhardy.

No knife prevails against a stone;
Nor bends the unbending tree;
No good advice from Needle-Face
Helped indocility.

Story 22

Right-Mind and Wrong-Mind

In a city there once lived two friends, sons of merchants, and their names were Right-Mind and Wrong-Mind. These two traveled to another far away country in order to earn money. There, Right-Mind, as a consequence of good fortune, found a pot containing a thousand gold coins, which had been hidden long ago by a holy man. He debated the matter with Wrong-Mind and they decided to return home, since their object of attaining wealth had been attained.

When they neared their native city, Right-Mind said, "My good friend, one half of this is your share. Please take it, so that when we get home, our friends and family may hold us in high regard."

But Wrong-Mind, with a sneaking thought of seeking greater advantage to himself, said to Right-Mind, "My good friend, it would be good for both of us to put aside some of our treasure for a rainy day. Let us each take a hundred gold coins for now and bury the remainder. This way, our friends and family would also not be jealous of our good fortune."

Right-Mind, in the nobility of his nature, did not comprehend the hidden duplicity of his friend and agreed to the proposal. Each took a hundred gold coins. They carefully hid the remainder in the ground and entered their home city.

Before long, Wrong-Mind exhausted his preliminary share thanks to his vice of wasteful expenditure. He made another pact with Right-Mind and they each took another hundred gold coins this time. Within a year, this too had slipped in the same

way through Wrong-Mind's fingers. He then thought, "What is the use of dividing the treasure like this each time? I think I prefer to steal the remaining six hundred coins." Having made the decision, he went alone, removed the treasure and leveled the ground.

A month later, he took the initiative to meet Right-Mind and said, "My good friend, let us divide the rest of the money equally." So he and Right-Mind visited the spot and began to dig. When the excavation failed to reveal any treasure, the impudent Wrong-Mind yelled, "O Right-Mind! How you have cheated me! You must have stolen it. Give me my half. Otherwise, I will take you to court."

"Be silent you villain!" said Right-Mind. It is beyond me to engage in such acts of crime. You know the verse:

A man right-minded sees but trash,
Mere clods of earth, in others' cash;
A mother in his neighbor's wife;
In all that lives, his own dear life."

So together they carried their dispute to court and related the theft of the money. When the magistrates learned the facts, they decreed an ordeal for each. But Wrong-Mind said, "Come on! This judgment is not proper. For the legal dictum states:

Best evidence is written word;
Next, witnesses who saw and heard;
Then only let ordeals prevail
When witnesses completely fail.

In the present case, I have a witness, the goddess of the wood. She will reveal to you which one of us is guilty, which not guilty." And they replied, "You are quite right, sir. Now we also feel a great interest in the case. You must both accompany us

tomorrow morning to that part of the forest." With this they accepted a plea for bail from each and sent them home.

Then Wrong-Mind went home and sought his father's help. "Dear Father, I have landed a great fortune. I only need one small favour from you. This very night I am going to hide you out of sight in a hole in the mimosa tree that grows near the spot where I dug out the treasure earlier. In the morning you must be my witness in the presence of the magistrates and utter some small words."

"Oh, my son," said the father, "we are both lost. This scheme has no chance of saving us. It lacks wisdom and careful thought."

But Wrong-Mind disdained such paternal warning and at night he hid his father out of sight in the hole in the tree. When morning came, the scamp took a bath, put on clean garments and followed Right-Mind and the magistrates to the mimosa tree, where he cried in piercing tones:

"O blessed Goddess of the wood, which of us two is the thief? Speak."

Then Wrong-Mind's father spoke from his hole in the mimosa, "Gentlemen, Right-Mind took that money." When all the king's men heard this statement, their eyes bulged out in astonishment and they searched hard to find the appropriate legal penalty to mete out to Right-Mind.

Meanwhile Right-Mind, calmly moved a pile of dry leaves in front of a hole in the mimosa tree and set it on fire. As the mimosa burned, Wrong-Mind's father rushed out of the hole with a pitiful wail, his body scorched and his eyes popping out. They all asked, "Why sir, what does this mean?"

"It is all Wrong-Mind's doing," he replied. The king's men meted out appropriate punishment to Wrong-Mind, while they commended Right-Mind for his calm, resolute action and conferred upon him many favors.



Principle

One should always be wary of friends who have a tendency to be scheming and deceiving. Yet a calm, clear mind is a great asset that can outwit those of evil intention.

Story 23

The Sensible Enemy

There was once a prince who made friends with a merchant's son and the son of a man of learning. Every day the three sought entertainment in various diversions and pastimes. The prince had a strong aversion to the study of archery, horse-riding, driving and hunting. One day, when his father gave him a strong lecture on how he showed no aptitude for taking over the kingdom, he disclosed to his two friends the injury this had inflicted on his self-esteem.

They rejoined, "Our fathers are also constantly rebuking us when we show our aversion for their lines of business. The pleasure we have taken in your friendship over these last few days has helped us forget this tribulation momentarily. Seeing you grieve, we are also plunged in despondency."

Thereupon the prince said, "It would be unmanly for me to remain in this kingdom after being insulted this. Since we all share the same grief, let us all go somewhere else. For:

The truly self-respecting man
Discovers what he is, and can,
Deserves and dares and understands
By travelling in foreign lands."

Filled with determination, they pondered where they should go. The merchant's son said, " You know that no desire is fulfilled anywhere without money. Let us therefore go to Climbing Mountain, where we may find precious gems and enjoy every

heart's desire." So they all started out for Climbing Mountain.

There, as fate decreed, each of them found a priceless, magnificent gem, whereupon they debated, "How are we to guard these gems when we leave this spot by a forest trail thick with peril?" The son of the man of learning said, "You know I am the son of a counsellor and I have therefore thought of an appropriate plan. Let's swallow our gems and carry them in our stomachs. That way, we will not be an object of interest to merchants, highway robbers and other such people."

Having adopted this plan, each inserted his gem in a mouthful of food at dinner time and swallowed it. While they were doing so, a fellow who was resting unperceived on the mountain slope, observed them and reflected, "Look here! I too have roamed the slopes of Climbing Mountain for many days, searching for gems. But I had no luck. I found nothing. So I will travel with them and wherever they grow weary and rest to sleep, I will cut their stomachs open and take all the three gems."

With this in mind, he came down the slope and overtook them saying, "Good masters, I cannot cross this frightful forest alone and reach my home. Let me join your caravan and travel with you." All three agreed for they were of a friendly disposition and the four now continued their journey.

In that forest, near the trail, was a village, nestling in a rugged jungle. As the travellers passed through its outskirts, an old bird in a cage began to sing. This bird belonged to the aviary of the village chief and was his favorite pet.

The chief understood the meaning of the birds' songs and cried out in delight, "Listen to what this bird tells us. He says that there are precious gems in the possession of some travellers in this route and that we must stop them. Catch them and bring them here!"

When the travellers were caught, the chief stripped them with his own hand but found nothing. He set them free to resume

their journey. The bird sang the same story again so that the village chief had them brought back and freed them only after conducting another very detailed inspection.

Once more they started, but when the bird sang the same song impatiently, the chief called them back and asked them, "I have tested this bird time and again, and he never tells a lie. Now he insists there are gems in your possession. Where are they? " They replied, "If there are gems in our possession, how did your most careful search fail to reveal them?"

But the chief retorted, "If this bird says the same thing over and over again, the gems must certainly be there in your stomachs. It is now evening. At dawn I am determined to cut your stomachs open for the gems." Saying this, he ordered that they be thrown into a dungeon.

Then the captive thief reflected, "In the morning, when the stomachs are cut open and the chief finds such splendid gems, the greedy villain will be quite certain to slash my belly too. So my death is certain. Well, the proverb goes:

When that last hour arrives, that none,
However shrewd, may miss,
A noble spirit serves his kind,
And death itself is bliss.

It is best, then, to offer my own stomach first to the knife, saving the very men I had planned to kill. For when my stomach is cut open and the villain finds nothing from all his searching, he will finally cease to suspect the existence of gems and heartless though he is, he may have the mercy to let the others go free. Thus, I shall gain the glory of a generous deed in this world and a rebirth in purity hereafter. This is how a wise man should confront death and I am fortunate to get this opportunity." So the night passed.

At dawn the village chief was preparing to cut open their stomachs when the thief clasped his hands and humbly entreated him. "I cannot," he said, "behold the cutting of the stomachs of my dear brothers. Please be gracious and cut my stomach first."

To this the chief mercifully agreed but he found no sign of a gem in his stomach. He then cried in penitence, "Woe be to me! Swelling with greed at the mere interpretation of a bird's song, I have done a ghastly deed. There must be no gems in the others' stomachs either." The three were therefore set free uninjured.



Principle

It is more sensible to associate with wise foes than with foolish friends.

To foes of sense, not foolish friends,
Tis wiser far to cling.

Story 24

Godly and June

In a certain town, there was a monastery in a secluded spot. In it lived a holy man named Godly, who in course of time acquired a lot of money by selling finely woven garments, the numerous offerings of the faithful for whom he performed sacrifices. He trusted no man and kept his treasure under his arm by night and day. For there is wisdom in the proverb:

Money causes pain in getting;
In the keeping, pain and fretting;
Pain in loss and pain in spending:
Damn the trouble never ending!

Now a rogue named June observed the treasure under his arm and reflected: "How am I to take this treasure from him? In the first place, I cannot pierce the wall of the cell, which is compactly built of solid stone. And I cannot enter via the door, which is too high. I will talk to him, win his confidence, and become his disciple, and he will be in my power once I have his confidence. As the proverb says:

None lacking shrewdness flatter well;
None but a lover plays the swell;
No saints are found in judgment seats;
No clear, straightforward speaker cheats."

Having thus made up his mind, he approached Godly and uttered the words: "Glory to Shiva. Amen," then fell flat on his face and spoke with deference: "O holy sir! All life is vanity. Youth slips by like a mountain torrent. The days of our life are like chaff on fire. Delights of the flesh are as the shadow of a cloud. Union with son, friend, servant, wife, is but a dream. All this I discern clearly. What shall I do that I may safely cross the sea of many lives?"

On hearing this, Godly said respectfully: "My son, blessed are you, being thus indifferent to the world in early youth. The proverb says:

'Tis only saints in youth
That can be saints in truth:
Ah, who is not a saint
When ebbing passions faint?"

At this, June clasped the holy man's feet and said deferentially, "Holy sir, please favour me by initiating me with a mantra and by binding me in a vow."

In response Godly graciously gave him initiation and granted him discipleship. He then prescribed for June the vow of sleeping in a hut of thatch at the monastery gate, sharing with him the proverb:

Ascetics come to grief through greed;
And kings, who evil counsels heed;
Children through petting, wives through wine,
Through wicked sons a noble line;
A Brahmin through unstudied books,
A character through haunting crooks;
A farm is ruined through neglect;

And friendship, lacking kind respect;
Love dies through absence; fortunes crash
Through naughtiness; and hoarded cash
Through carelessness or giving rash.

June for his part made the holy man very happy by rendering appropriate service to him. Still, Godly guarded his treasure under his arm.

One day, the son of a student of Godly's came from the village, bearing an invitation to a ceremony at his home. On receiving this, Godly started for the village with June. As they travelled, they came across a river. Seeing the river, Godly took the treasure from under his arm, wrapped it carefully in his patched ascetic robe, worshipped the appropriate Gods and said to June: "June, I must take a dip in the river as prayer. Please keep an eye on this robe until I return." With these words, he moved away. As soon as he was out of sight, June seized the treasure and decamped.

When Godly returned from his dip, he examined his robes and realized that the treasure was gone. He started to scream, "June, June! Where did you go after cheating me? Give me an answer! I wish I had been shrewder to realize he was a cheat." He remembered the proverbs:

The guilty man is terrified
By reason of his crime. His pride
Is gone, his powers of speaking fail,
His glances rove, his face is pale.

The sweat appears upon the brow,
He stumbles on, he knows not how,
His face is pale, and all he utters
Is much distorted; for he stutters.

The culprit always may be found
To shake, and gaze upon the ground:
Observe the signs as best you can
And shrewdly pick the guilty man.

The innocent is self-reliant;
His speech is clear, his glance defiant;
His countenance is calm and free;
His indignation makes his plea.

With this repeated lamentation, he returned to his monastery.



Principle

Appearances can be deceptive. To discern a cheat requires shrewd and careful observation.

Story 25

The Interfering Monkey

Once upon a time there was a city in which a merchant was building a temple. As they worked each day, the temple workers would set out at noon for lunch.

One day, a troop of monkeys from the nearby jungle chanced upon the half-built temple when the workers had stepped away. There lay a huge block of wood that the workers had begun to split, a small wedge being thrust in at the top. The monkeys began to frolic around the tree and roof tops and reached the block of wood. One of them, whose doom was near, approached the block thinking, "Who stuck a wedge in this queer place?" So he seized it with both hands and started to work it loose. Exactly at the spot where his finger entered the cleft, the wedge gave way. Unable to bear the pain from a crushed finger, the monkey collapsed inside and met its end.



Principle

The intelligent should avoid meddling unnecessarily in others' affairs.

Book 2

The Winning of Friends

The first verse of this book goes:

The mouse and turtle, deer and crow,
Had first-rate sense and learning; so,
Though money failed and means were few,
They quickly put their purpose through.

In the southern city called Maidens' Delight, was a very lofty banyan tree with mighty trunk and branches, which gave refuge to all creatures. As the verse puts it:

Blest be the tree whose every part
Brings joy to many a creature's heart –
Its green roof shelters birds in rows,
While deer beneath its shadow doze;
Its flowers are sipped by tranquil bees,
And insects throng its cavities,
While monkeys in familiar mirth
Embrace its trunk. That tree has worth;
But others merely cumber earth.

In this tree there lived a crow named Swift. One morning he started toward the city in search of food. On the way he saw a hunter who lived in the neighborhood and who was

approaching the tree to trap birds. He looked hideous, flat-footed, dreadfully ugly with blood-shot eyes, his hair all knotted, club in hand, and was trailed by mean-looking dogs. He seemed the very incarnation of evil and unrighteousness.

When Swift saw him, he became disturbed and reflected, "Wonder what this sinner is up to. Is he going to hurt me? Or has he some other purpose?"

The hunter picked a spot, spread a snare, scattered grain and hid not far away. The birds who lived there were well-advised by Swift, regarded the rice grains as deadly poison and did not venture anywhere near the snare.

At this juncture, a dove-king named Gay-Neck, along with hundreds of fellow doves, was wandering in search of food and spied the rice grains from afar. Despite strong dissuasion from Swift, he greedily sought to eat them and landed in the great snare. The moment he did so, his flock and he were caught in the meshes. While at fault, he didn't deserve blame for he was indeed helpless in the face of hostile fate. As the saying goes:

When once the mind is gripped by fate,
The judgment even of the great,
In mortal meshes fettered, wends
To unintended, crooked ends.

So the hunter gleefully lifted his club and ran forward. Gay-Neck and his flock, seeing him advancing, were deeply distressed. The king, with great presence of mind, said to the doves, "Have no fear my friends. For

Provided judgment does not fail,
Whatever the distress,
Men reach the farther shore of woe,
And rest in happiness.

We must all agree in purpose, must fly up in unison and carry the snare away. This is only possible through united action. For death befalls those of disunited purpose. Union is indeed strength.

When the doves heard this, being eager to live, they united their efforts to carry the snare away, flew just a little above the ground, formed a canopy in the sky and proceeded without fear.

When the hunter saw the snare being carried away by the birds, he looked up in amazement thinking, "This is unprecedented." He thought to himself:

So long as they agree, they may
Carry the fatal snare away;
But they will quickly disagree,
And then those birds belong to me.

With these thoughts, he started to pursue them. When Gay-Neck perceived the savage pursuer and recognized his purpose, with judgment uncluttered, he started to fly over regions rough with hills and trees.

Now Swift, astonished by Gay-Neck's prudent conduct and the hunter's cruel purpose, kept following their actions, forgot his concern for food and followed the flock of doves with keen interest. He was thinking, "What will this noble soul do next? What about this villain?" At last the hunter, realizing that the doves were protected by the roughness of the terrain, turned back in disappointment, saying:

'What shall not be, will never be;
What shall be, follows painlessly;
The thing your fingers grasp, will flit,
If fate has predetermined it.

If fate be hostile, even gains
Acquired no man can hold;
They go and take his other wealth,
Like hoards of magic gold.

Not only have I nothing to eat, but I have also lost the snare which was my means of supporting the family."

When Gay-Neck saw that the hunter had turned back hopelessly, he said to the doves, "See! We may now travel in peace. The villainous hunter has turned back. Our best plan is to now fly to the city Maidens' Delight. For in its northeastern quarter dwells a mouse named Gold, a dear friend of mine. He will cut our bonds quickly. He is competent to set us free from this snare."

They all flew as he directed and were eager to meet the mouse named Gold. When they reached the hole which had been converted into a fortress, they alighted.

Gold was alarmed at the sound of birds approaching his hole and darted deep into his fortress. Gay-Neck took his stand at a gate of the den and said, "My dear Gold, please come out and see what plight I am in."

Gold, from within his fortress said, "My good sir, who are you? What is your errand? Of what nature is your misfortune? Please inform me." Gay-Neck answered, "Why, my name is Gay-Neck. I am king of the doves and a friend of yours. Won't you greet me?" At this the mouse rejoiced in his body and soul. He rushed out, saying:

If daily to his home
The friends who love him come,
And coming, bring delight
To eyes that kindle bright,
A man has found the whole
Of life within his soul.

Observing that Gay-Neck and his flock were caught in a snare, he said sadly, "My good friend, what is this? How did it all happen? Tell me."

"My good friend," answered Gay-Neck, "don't you know the proverbs:"

A hundred leagues and twenty-five
The vulture spies his meat,
But – fate decreeing – fails to see
The snare before his feet.

Snake, bird and elephant are caged;
The moon and sun go through eclipse;
The wise are poor: all this I see,
And think how dreadfully fate grips.

Why speak of virtue here or moral harm?
What stance could help or mar?
'Tis Time that stretches forth a fatal arm,
And seizes from afar."

When Gay-Neck had thus spoken, Gold began to cut his bonds but Gay-Neck stopped him saying, "My good friend, this is wrong. Please cut my followers' bonds first." Gold retorted saying, "Come on! Servants come after the master." "No, no, my good friend. All these poor birds have chosen to follow me. This is my way of showing my respect for them. You know the proverb:

The king who offers honor to
His followers beyond their due,
Has servants glad who never quail,
Not even should his money fail.

Through trust, the root of happy power,
A creature wins to kingship's flower;
While lions, born to kingship, must
As tyrants govern, lacking trust.

Besides, after cutting my bonds, your tooth might hurt too much. Or that villainous hunter might return. I would then certainly plunge to hell. As the proverb says:

A king who is content to know
That loyal servants suffer woe,
Will later go to hell, but first
Will see his earthly projects burst."

"Yes," said Gold, "I am well aware of this royal duty. I was only testing you. I shall proceed to first cut the bonds of your followers. As you know:

The king who mercifully grants
Due share in all good circumstance
To serving-folk, may fitly rise
The triple world to supervise."

When Gold had cut the bonds of all the birds, he turned to Gay-Neck and said, "Now my friend, you are free to go home." Gay-Neck then returned home with his retinue. There is indeed wisdom in the saying:

Because a man can gain his ends,
Though difficult, with aid of friends,
Get friends and feel those friends to be
Integral with prosperity.

Swift, who had followed Gay-Neck's capture and release, was filled with astonishment and he thought, "What intelligence does this Gold possess! What capacity! What an ingenious fortress! It would be wise for me to befriend Gold. I am of a suspicious temperament and do not confide in anybody. And I know I am too clever to be duped by anybody. Yet, I should win a friend. For the proverb says:

Even the self-sufficient should
Get friends and seek a greater good:
The ocean fears no diminution,
Yet waits Arcturus' contribution."

After these reflections, he flew down from his tree, approached the gate of the den and called out, "Gold, my dear sir, please come out."

Hearing this, Gold reflected, "Is this perhaps another dove who, still entangled, is addressing me?" He called back, "Who are you sir?" "I am a crow," was the answer. "My name is Swift."

On hearing this, Gold ran further deep into his fortress and said, "I see no advantage in making your acquaintance." "But," said the crow, "I have seen how you relieved Gay-Neck of his bonds through your exertions. I have gained respect for you. Please befriend me."

"Sir," answered Gold, "I am what you have for your food. How can I feel friendship for you? You must have heard of the saying:

The dull think inequalities
In strength no fatal blocks
To friendship. True – but they are *dull.*
And public laughingstocks.

Please be gone."

"Look!" said the crow. "Here I perch at the gate of your den. If you do not make friends with me, I shall starve to death." "But," said Gold, "how can I make friends with you, with an enemy? For the proverb says:

Make no truce, however snug,
With foemen dire:
Water, even boiling hot,
Will quench a fire."

"Why," said the crow, "you do not even know me well. Why should there be any strife between us? Please don't say such things."

"Sir," said Gold, "strife is of two kinds, natural and incidental. Now you and I are in natural strife. And as the saying goes:

By incidental means one ends
An incidental strife,
And quickly. Nature's kind endures
Until the loss of life.

Incidental strife springs from a specific cause and can therefore be removed by rendering an appropriate service. But strife rooted in nature never disappears. Thus there is enduring strife between mongoose and snake; herbivores and carnivores; water and fire; gods and devils; dogs and cats; rival wives; lions and elephants; hunter and deer; crow and owl; scholar and fool; saint and sinner. In these cases, nobody has killed the loved ones of the other or done him any specific harm, yet they fight to the death.

Whoever trusts a faithless friend
And twice in him believes,
Lays hold on death as certainly
As when a mule conceives."

"But", retorted the crow,

"The beasts and birds as friends are won
For cause; plain folks, for service done;
And silly souls, for greed or fright –
But good men are your friends at sight.

Like pots of clay, the wicked friend
Is quick to smash and hard to mend:
Like pots of gold the righteous flash,
As quick to mend, as hard to smash.

Each segment of a sugar-cane
Beyond the tip, is sweeter;
The friendship of the good is so –
The other kind grows bitter.

I assure you that I am upright. Besides, I will reassure you by taking oaths."

Gold maintained his stance and said,

Through a narrow crevice slip
Enemies who gloat,
Bringing slow destruction, like
Water in a boat.

If, relying on their means,
Men confide in foes,
Or in wives whose love is lost,
Life abruptly goes."

To this Swift found no rejoinder and he thought, "What eminent intelligence does Gold possess in the field of social ethics! Yet for that very reason, I crave his friendship even more." And he said, "Sir, I plead with you to be my friend. You must grant me this. If you refuse, I shall starve where I stand."

Gold reflected, "He is not unintelligent. His speech proves it.

None lacking shrewdness flatter well;
None but a lover plays the swell;
No saints are found in judgment seats;
No clear, straightforward speaker cheats.

So I must certainly grant him my friendship."

Having made up his mind thus, he said to the crow, "My dear sir, you have won my confidence. But it was necessary to first test your intelligence. I now accept your hand of friendship." With this he started to emerge from his fortress but stopped halfway. Swift said, "Do you still cherish some reason to mistrust me? I see you have stopped."

"I have no fear of you," said Gold, "for I have examined your mind. But what if I meet death through other friends of yours by accepting your friendship?" To this the crow replied:

'Friends purchased at the price of death
To other friends and true,
One should avoid, like worthless corn
Where finest rice-plants grew."

Hearing this, Gold hastened forth and they greeted each other cordially. Swift then said, "I will not keep you outside longer. I must search for some food." With this he left his friend and flew into a thick jungle where he found a dead buffalo. Of this he ate his fill and returned home, carrying a lump of red meat for Gold. He cried out, "Come out my dear Gold! Come out! Enjoy this meat that I have brought."

Gold, on his part, had prepared a great heap of corn and rice for his friend. He said, "My dear friend, please enjoy this rice that I have prepared to the best of my ability."

So each was highly pleased with the other and they ate each other's food and reciprocated kindly feeling. This, indeed, is the seed of friendship. As the verse puts it:

Six things are done by friends:
To take and give again;
To listen and to talk;
To dine, to entertain.

No friendship ever comes
Without some kindly deed:
The very gods respond
To gifts they have decreed.

As soon as presents cease,
So soon does friendship die:
The calf deserts the cow
Whose udder has gone dry.

And thus,

The mouse and crow became
Such friends as never fail,

Enduring, hard to split
As flesh and finger nail.

The mouse got so captivated by the crow that he grew confident to the point of feeling quite at home between his wings.

One day, the crow appeared with tears in his eyes and sobbing, he said, "My dear Gold, I have grown dissatisfied with this country. I intend to travel. There has been a dreadful drought in this country. So the city people, driven by famine, have not only ceased to give the birds a few crumbs, but are actually setting bird-traps in every house. Fortunately, I have not been caught, for further life is destined for me. Yet this is why I shed tears and this is why I plan to visit another land."

"Tell me where you plan to go," said Gold. And Swift replied, "In the far south is a great lake in the heart of the jungle. There lives a turtle named Slow, a bosom friend of mine, very dear to me. He will give me bits of fish that I can digest easily. In his company, I shall be happy and enjoy the delight of his conversations that sparkle with wit. Besides, I cannot bear to see such slaughter of birds. For the proverb says:

Blest are they who do not see
Death upon the family,
Friend in trouble, stolen wife,
Ruin of the nation's life."

"Considering the circumstances," said Gold, "I will accompany you. I shall be very lonely in your absence. But I feel distraught at the thought of abandoning my home for a foreign land."

The crow offered him consolation, "My dear fellow, you must not lose heart at leaving your country. Intelligent as you are, why feel disturbed without reason? Consider the saying:

The merely learned is a fool;
The wise man uses action's tool:
For no remembered drug can cure
The sick by name alone, 'tis sure.

To brave and wise what land is strange,
Or native? Whatsoever change
Befall, he makes the land his own
By strength of valiant arm alone:
The lion's whim is jungle law
By strength of tooth and tail and claw;
He slaughters elephants for food,
And slakes his servants' thirst with blood.

Therefore my friend, we must always be energetic. You know the saying:

As frogs will find a drinking-hole,
Or birds a brimming lake,
So friends and money seek a man
Whose vigor does not break.

The goddess Fortune seeks as home
The brave and friendly man,
The grateful, righteous soul who does
Each moment what he can,
Who regulates a sturdy life
Upon an active plan.

If man be fatalist and slacker,
Irresolute and sang-froid lacker,

Him Fortune – as a bouncing miss
Her aged lover – hates to kiss.

It is only cowards who are reluctant to leave their native place. To the competent, there is no distinction between native and foreign land. You must have heard of the saying:

Brave, learned, fair,
Where'er they roam,
Without delay
Are quite at home.

The shrewdly valiant on earth
Will always master money's worth;
Not those of godlike scholarship –
'Tis certain – if they lose their grip.

You may not be wealthy today. Yet, you have sense and vigor. As the proverb says:

Let sturdy resolution guide,
And poor men touch the peak of pride;
Let money fold in its embrace
The mean, they sink to lowly place:
The lion's majesty derives
From nature, rich because he strives
To crown his feats with nobler feats.
What golden-collared dog competes?

Some men compacted of self-rigor
With valor, enterprise and vigor
Indifferently view the muddle

Of ocean and the petty puddle;
As at some wretched ant-hill, frown
At Himalaya's highest crown:
To these, not those who wait and see,
Comes Fortune, tripping eagerly.

For, after all:

Why, wealthy, puff with pride?
Why, poor, in gloom subside?
Since, like a stricken ball,
Men's fortunes rise and fall.

Youth and wealth are as unstable as water bubbles. So if an intelligent man catches slippery money, he must make it fruitful by giving it away or enjoying it. For:

The miser for another hoards
His bags of needless money:
The bees laboriously pack,
But others taste the honey.

You are now healthy and enjoy peace of mind. This is the supreme possession. As the saying goes:

The lord of seven continents,
Beset by crawling greed,
Is but a beggar; he who lives
Content, is rich indeed.

No treasure equals charity;
Content is perfect wealth;

No gem compares with character;
No wish fulfilled, with health.

You must never think of how you will survive if you leave your possessions behind. For money runs out, it is only man's character that abides. As the proverb says:

The noble man, indeed, may fall
To earth – like an elastic ball;
The coward who drops is down to stay,
Is flattened like a ball of clay."

"Thank you dear friend. I now feel much better and am ready to depart with you," said Gold. "But", said the crow, "I travel in air, you on the ground. How will you accompany me?" Gold answered, "If you feel concern for the preservation of my life, mount me on your back and carry me very gently."

At this the crow was delighted and said, "If that is possible, I am blessed indeed. Let's do it! I shall carry you in comfort." Gold then mounted the crow, who set off into the sky. Then, very gently, he brought him to the lake.

There, Slow saw a mouse riding a crow. Wondering who he might be, he plopped into the water, for he was a good judge of occasions. After depositing Gold in a hole in a tree on the bank, Swift, perching himself on the tip of a twig, called in a piercing tone, "Friend Slow! Come here! I am your crow friend. I come to you after a long period of absence, my heart filled with longing. Come, embrace me. For the saying runs:

Bring sandalwood or camphor? No!
Nor even flakes of cooling snow;
All are not worth the sixteenth part
Of rest upon a friendly heart."

When he heard this, Slow peered at Swift carefully from beneath the water. Then, with a quiver of delight and with eyes swimming in joyful tears, he hurriedly scrambled from the water saying, "I failed to recognize you. Please forgive me!" When Swift flew down from the tree, he embraced him.

Utterly delighted, the two sat beneath the tree and told each other their adventures during the long separation. Gold also came there and sat down. Spotting him, Slow said to Swift, "Who is this mouse? Why did you mount him, your natural food, on your back and bring him here?"

Swift replied, "He is a mouse named Gold, a friend of mine, almost my second life. He wishes to stay here with us.

His virtues, like the streams of rain
Or stars that dot the sky
Or like the grains of dust on earth
All numbering defy."

Slow said to Gold, "My dear fellow, have no fear. In this place you are at home. Please dismiss any anxiety that you may feel and treat this as your own dwelling."

Swift was thrilled that Slow accepted Gold so whole-heartedly. His face blossomed, he said, "Slow, you are truly virtuous. In this act of offering comfort to Gold, you have brought perfect satisfaction to my heart. As the proverb puts it:

They taste the best of bliss, are good,
And find life's truest ends,
Who, glad and gladdening, rejoice
In love, with loving friends.

The richest man is penniless,
A living naught, a vain distress,

If greed, true wealth destroying bends
His soul to lack the charm of friends.

No man deserves the praise of men,
Nor meets the vow of virtue, when
The poor or suppliant from him go
Averted, sunk in hopeless woe.

What manhood is there, making not
The sad, secure?
What wealth is that, availing not
To aid the poor?
What sort of act, performed without
Good consequence?
What kind of life, that glory feels
To be offense?"

While they were conversing thus, a deer named Spot arrived, panting with thirst and quivering from fear of being hit by hunters' arrows. Seeing him approach, Swift flew into a tree, Gold crept into a grass-clump and Slow sought asylum in the water. Spot stood near the bank, trembling for his safety.

Then Swift flew into the air, inspected the terrain for the distance of a league, settled on his tree again and called out to Slow, "My friend, come out, come out! No evil threatens you here. I have inspected the forest closely. It is just this deer who has come to the lake for water." The three then gathered as before.

Out of friendly feelings towards their guest, Slow said to the deer, "My good friend, please drink and take a bath. Our water is of excellent quality and is cool." Spot thought, after reflecting on this invitation, "Not the slightest danger threatens me from these animals. A turtle can do no mischief when out of water.

The mouse and crow only feed on what is dead. So I shall join their company."

Slow bade him welcome and said, "I hope you are doing well. How have you found yourself in the neck of these woods?" Spot replied, "I am weary of a life without love. Dogs and hunters have been chasing me throughout. Fear lent me speed and I was able to escape and come here. I wish to befriend all of you."

Slow said, "We are small in stature, compared to you. It is unnatural for you to make friends with us. One should make friends with those capable of returning favors." But Spot rejoined:

"Better with the learned dwell,
Even though it be in hell
Than with vulgar spirits roam
Palaces that gods call home.

And who said that the puny are of little consequence? Your speech tells me that your minds are excellent. I insist that you make friends with me today."

When Slow listened to this, he said, "So be it my dear fellow. Have no fear. Please feel at home."

So they ate and played together and spent time reciprocating friendship, discussing a variety of masterly works on religion, economics and similar subjects. And this is quite natural:

For men of sense, good poetry
And science will suffice:
The time of dunderheads is spent
In squabbling, sleep and vice.

A thrill
Will fill
The wisest heart,
When flow
Bons mots
Composed with art,
Though females be
Removed apart.

One day Spot failed to appear at the regular hour. Missing him and slightly alarmed by his rare absence, Swift and Gold concluded that he could be in trouble and were unable to keep up their spirits. Then Slow and Gold said to Swift, "Since you can fly, please try to find out the whereabouts of our friend. He may have been eaten by a lion, singed by a forest fire or have fallen into the power of hunters and other creatures. There is a saying:

One quickly fears for loved ones who
In pleasure-gardens play:
What, then, if they in forests grim
And peril-bristling stay?

By all means, please search for Spot and return to us quickly."

Swift flew a little distance to the edge of a swamp and found Spot caught in a thick trap braced with pegs of wood. He cried, "My dear friend, how did you fall into this distress?"

"My friend," said Spot, "please listen to me:

When life is near an end,
The presence of a friend

Brings happiness, allying
The living with the dying.

Please pardon any expressions of friendly impatience I may have used in our discussions. Please pass this on to Slow and Gold:

If any ugly word
Was willy-nilly heard,
I pray you both, forgive –
Let only friendship live."

Swift replied, "Feel no fear my dear fellow, while you have friends like us. I shall return quickly, bringing Gold to cut your bonds."

His heart in a flutter, he found Slow and Gold, explained to them the nature of Spot's captivity and returned to Spot, carrying Gold in his beak. On seeing his friend's plight, Gold said, "My friend, you always had a wary mind and a shrewd eye. How did this captivity befall you?"

Spot rejoined, "Why ask, my friend? Fate, you know, does what it will.

In dead of night,
Or broad daylight,
Grim fate may smite;
Ah, who can fight
An unseen foe?

You my friend, inclined towards spiritual philosophy, are familiar with the caprices of destiny. Please be quick and cut my bonds before the pitiless hunter returns."

"Have no fear while I am at your side," said Gold. At this moment Slow joined them. His heart was so full of love for his friend that he had followed.

Gold then cut the bonds. At that moment the hunter arrived. Gold quickly slipped into a crevice nearby. Swift flew into the air and Spot darted away.

When the hunter saw that the deer's bonds had been cut, he was filled with amazement and said, "Deer cannot cut their own bonds. Fate has somehow been kind to this deer." He then spotted Slow who had not been fast enough to escape before being spotted. With mixed feelings, the hunter said to himself, "Even if the deer, with fate's help, cut his bonds and escaped, I am lucky to have found this turtle." So he cut some grass with his knife, wove a stout rope, tied the turtle's feet tightly together, fastened the rope to his bow-tip and started home. When Gold saw his friend being carried away, he sorrowfully said, "Ah, me! Ah, me!

'Tis hard to find in life
A friend, a bow, a wife,
Strong, supple to endure,
In stock and sinew pure,
In time of danger sure.

False friends are common. Yes, but where
True nature links a friendly pair,
The blessing is as rich as rare.

No long experience alloys
True friendship's sweet and supple joys;
No evil men can steal the treasure;
'Tis death, death only, sets a measure.

In truth, I do not grieve though riches flee;
Some lucky change will bring them back to me:
'Tis this that hurts me – lacking riches' stay,
The best of friends relax and fall away.

Ah, there is wisdom in the saying:

The body, born, is near its doom;
And riches are the source of gloom;
All meetings end in partings: yes,
The world is all one brittleness.

While Gold recited these grief-stricken sayings, Spot and Swift joined him in his lamentations. Gold then said, "So long as our dear Slow is within sight, we have a chance to save him. Leave us, Spot. You must slip past the hunter unobserved, drop to the ground somewhere near water and pretend to be dead. Swift, you must spread your claws around Spot's horns and pretend to peck out his eyes. Then that beastly hunter, in his greed, will believe that he has found a dead deer and will certainly wish to seize him. He will throw the turtle on the ground and hurry to grab the deer. When his back is turned, I for my part will in a mere twinkling, set Slow free to seek refuge in the water nearby, restoring him to his natural fortress. I myself will slide into a grass-clump. You, furthermore, must dart away when the hunter approaches you." So they put this plan into practice.

When the hunter saw a deer as good as dead beside the water and noticed that a crow was pecking at him, he joyfully threw the turtle on the ground and ran for a club. As soon as Spot could sense by the sound of his footsteps, that the hunter was close to him, he leapt into the dense forest with great speed. Swift flew into a tree. The turtle, his fetters cut by Gold, scrambled to shelter in the water. Gold slipped into a grass-clump.

It seemed like a conjurer's trick to the hunter. "What does it mean?" he cried in disappointment. He returned to the spot where he had left the turtle and saw the cord cut in a hundred pieces. He perceived that the turtle had vanished like a magician and now anticipated danger for himself. With a troubled heart, he ran out of the forest headed for his home, casting anxious glances at the horizon.

Meanwhile, the four friends, free of all injury, came together, expressed their mutual affection, took on a new lease of life and lived happily. And so:

If beasts enjoy so great a prize
Of friendship, why should wonder rise
In men, who are so very wise?

Thus ends the book "The Winning of Friends" whose first verse runs:

The deer and turtle, mouse and crow
Had first-rate sense and learning; so,
Though money failed and means were few,
They quickly put their purpose through.



Principle

True friendship is priceless and can see one through life's toughest moments. Wise people should always strive to gain and stay in the company of genuine, sincere friends.

Story 26

The Mice That Set Elephants Free

There was once a region where people, houses and temples had fallen into decay. In the crevices in the floors of these dwellings, there lived a dense family of mice. Three generations lived there happily, enjoying festivals, dramas, wedding-feasts and other parties. Time thus passed.

Into this scene burst an elephant-king with his numerous followers. They had all set out for a lake in search of water. As they marched through the mouse community, they crushed faces, eyes, heads and necks of all the mice that they encountered.

The survivors held a convention. "We are being killed by these lumbering elephants. Curse them! We must devise a way to end this crisis," they cried.

Some of them then went to the lake, bowed before the elephant king and said respectfully, "O King, not far from here lives our entire community. We have prospered there through several generations. You gentlemen, on your way to this lake, have destroyed us in thousands. If you feel any compassion for us, please travel through another path. Please remember that even creatures of our size could be of help to you someday."

The elephant king pondered these words, decided that what the mice said made perfect logical sense and granted their request.

Some time elapsed. One day, a certain king ordered his men to trap all the elephants in the region. A water-trap was constructed. The elephant king and his herd were trapped and

tied up with ropes to trees in that same forest.

When the trappers were gone, the elephant king reflected, "In what manner, or with whose assistance shall we now escape?" He then remembered the mice, "We have no other way to escape than to seek help from the mice."

So the king sent for one of his followers who had not ventured into the trap. He told him about the whereabouts of the mice colony and directed him to communicate their predicament to the mice king.

When the mice learned of this, they gathered by the thousand, eager to return the favor shown to them and rushed to the elephant herd. They gnawed at the ropes vigorously and set their friends free.



Principle

Befriend the good and learned, regardless of whether they are strong or weak.

Make friends, make friends, however strong
Or weak they be:
Recall the captive elephants
That mice set free.

Story 27

Soft, the Weaver

In a certain town there lived a weaver. His name was Soft and he spent his time making garments dyed in various patterns, fit for kings and princes. Despite all his hard work, he was unable to save money beyond what he needed for his basic expenses. He saw other weavers who made coarse fabrics and yet rolled in wealth. He said to his wife, "Look at these fellows, my dear. They make coarse garments but somehow manage to earn heaps of money. This city is unkind to me. I am going to move to a new place to seek my fortune."

"Oh, my dear," said his wife, "it is a mistake to say that money comes to those who travel. There is a proverb:

What shall not be, will never be;
What shall be, follows painlessly:
The thing your fingers grasp, will flit,
If fate has predetermined it.

So stay here and just take care of your business as usual."

"You are mistaken, my dear," said he. "No deed comes to fruition without effort. There is a proverb:

You cannot clap a single hand;
Nor, effortless, do what you planned.

Although, at meal-time, fate provide
A richly, loaded plate,
No food will reach the mouth, unless
The hand cooperate.

Through work, not wishes, every plan
Its full fruition reaps:
No deer walk down the lion's throat
So long as lion sleeps.

Suppose he gave the best he had,
Yet no fruition came,
'Twas fate that blocked his efforts, not
The man who was to blame.

I must go to another country." So he went to Growing City, worked there for three years and returned home with savings of three hundred gold coins.

On his way back, he found himself in a great forest at dusk. Being cautious, he climbed upon a stout branch of a banyan tree and dozed off. In the middle of the night, as he slept, he saw two human figures whose eyes were bloodshot with fury. They were abusing each other.

The first said, "Come now, Doer! You know you have, in every possible way, prevented this fellow Soft from gathering any capital beyond food and his other basic needs. So why did you give him three hundred gold coins now?"

"Now, Deed!" said the other, "I am obliged to give the enterprising a reward in proportion to their hard work. The final consequence is your affair. Take it from him yourself." On hearing this, Soft awoke and looked for his bag of gold and found that it was empty. He thought, "Oh, dear! I went through so much trouble to earn the money and it has disappeared in a

flash. I have nothing now. How can I look my wife and friends in the eye?" So he made up his mind to return to Growing City. There he earned five hundred gold coins in just a year and returned home, by a different road this time.

When the sun had set, he came to the same banyan tree and he thought, "Oh, no! What is fate up to? It is the same fiendish old banyan tree again." He dozed off on a branch and saw the same two figures again. One of them said, "Doer, why did you give this fellow Soft five hundred gold pieces? Don't you know that he shouldn't get a thing beyond food and the basics?"

"Friend Deed," said the other, "I am obliged to give the enterprising their due. The final consequence is your affair. So why blame me?"

When poor Soft heard this, he turned to his bag and found it empty again. He plunged into the depths of gloom and thought, "Oh, dear! What good is life to me if I keep losing all my money? I will hang myself from this banyan tree and bid farewell to life on this wretched earth."

Having made up his mind, he wove a rope of spear-grass, adjusted it to form a noose for his neck, climbed onto a branch, fastened it and was about to let himself drop, when one of the figures appeared in the sky and said, "Do not be so rash, Friend Soft. I am the person who takes off all excess money that comes your way. Now go home. But feel free to ask me for any wish."

"In that case," said Soft, "give me plenty of money." "My good fellow", said the other, "what will you do with money which you cannot enjoy or give away? For you are destined to have no use for money beyond food and your other basic needs."

Soft replied, "Even if I find no use for it, I would still want it. For anyone who is rich becomes an object of desire. So give me plenty of money."

"All right," said the figure. "go once more to Growing City. There dwell two sons of merchants; their names are Penny-

Hide and Penny-Fling. When you have observed their conduct, you may come back to me and seek your wish again." With this, he vanished and Soft returned to Growing City, his mind perplexed.

At twilight, he wearily inquired about Penny-Hide's residence and reached there. No one welcomed him; yet he made his way to the courtyard and sat down. At dinner time he received food but no kind word and went to sleep there.

At night he saw the same two human figures holding council. One of them said, "Come now, Doer! Why are you making Penny-Hide incur more expense on account of this Soft, with a meal to provide?"

The second replied, "Friend Deed, it is no fault of mine. I simply deal with acquisition and expenditure in proportion to deeds. The final consequence is your affair." When the poor fellow awoke, he had to fast because Penny-Hide now suffered from an attack of cholera.

So Soft left that house and went to Penny-Fling's residence. There he was made to feel deeply honoured and treated cordially. He rested in a comfortable bed and at night, he saw the same two figures. One of them said, "Come now, Doer! This fellow Penny-Fling is happily entertaining Soft. How will he pay off all the resulting debt? He has no cash in the bank." "Friend Deed," said the second, "I had to do it. The final consequence is your affair." At dawn a policeman came with money, a favor from the king and gave it all to Penny-Fling.

When he saw this, Soft thought, "This Penny-Fling is a much better person even if has no money, than that miserly Penny-Hide. The proverb is right:

The Scriptures' fruit is pious homes;
Right conduct, that of learned tomes;
Wives fructify in joy and son;
And money's fruit is gifts and fun.

So may the blessed Lord make me a person whose money is spent on gifts and fun. I see no good in being like Penny-Hide.

So the Lord of All took him at his word and made him that kind of a person.



Principle

Fate dictates whether wealth that is earned sticks with a person or leaves him

Story 28

Gold's Gloom

In a certain city, there lived a hermit named Crop-Ear. He begged for his food and would fill his alms-bowl with whatever eatables he received. Upon returning home, he would eat to satisfy his momentary hunger and hang the remaining food in his alms-bowl on a peg, for his next meal. Now a mouse named Gold lived in his house with his companions. They subsisted on this left-over food that Crop-Ear kept. And time passed by.

The hermit soon discovered that the food he was storing away, was getting nibbled at by mice. This disgusted him. So he kept moving his alms-bowl to different places in the house, hanging it higher each time. Gold would however manage to find the new place somehow and continued to nibble at the hermit's food.

One day, a holy guest arrived at the hermit's house. Crop-Ear welcomed him, paid him due respect and offered him food and water. At night they lay down and narrated pious tales of devotion to each other. But Crop-Ear's thoughts were so preoccupied with mice that he kept striking the alms-bowl with a bamboo stick and listened to the guest only very absent-mindedly.

The guest grew upset and said, "Come on, Crop-Ear! It seems like our friendship is dead. You do not speak with me whole-heartedly as before. So even though it is the middle of the night, I shall leave your home and go elsewhere. For there is a saying:

'Come! Enter! News from town?
A chair! You look run down!
Welcome! Why have you slighted
Our home so long? Delighted!'
Such kindly words as these
May set the mind at ease,
And friends be glad to go
Where they are greeted so.

Wherever hosts look vaguely round
Or fix their glances on the ground,
The guests who visit such a place
Are hornless, yet of bovine race.

You should not visit any home
From which no gentle greetings come,
Which fails in eager promptitude,
With gossip touching bad and good.

You have forgotten what friendship means due to excessive pride in the ownership of this dwelling. It is indeed sad!"

When he heard this, Crop-Ear was terrified and said, "Do not speak thus, holy sir. There is no friend closer to my heart than you. Please listen to the reason for my inattention. There is a villainous mouse that jumps and climbs to my alms-bowl, however high I hang it and he eats my left-overs. It is to frighten the mouse that I strike the alms-bowl repeatedly with my bamboo stick. This is the whole story. I must also add that the villain has such cleverness that he could put cats, monkeys and all other creatures to shame."

The holy guest then said, "Have you found the mouse hole anywhere?" "Holy sir," said Crop-Ear, "I have not." "Surely,"

said the other, "his hole is over your hoard. I am sure that it is the fragrance from your hoard that makes him spry. For:

The smell of wealth is quite enough
To wake a creature's sterner stuff;
And wealth's enjoyment, even more,
With virtuous giving from his store.

Do you know his manner of attack?" "Yes, holy sir, I do," answered Crop-Ear. "He comes not alone, but with a school of mice."

"Well now," said the holy guest, "is there any digging tool around here?" "Indeed there is," said Crop-Ear. "Here is a handy pickaxe made of solid iron." "In that case," said the guest, "you and I must wake up early and follow their tracks together, while their footprints are still visible on the floor."

When Gold the mouse heard this conversation, he was very alarmed and thought, "Ah, this spells ruin for me. His words imply something more. Just as he has rightly marked my hoard, so will he also soon discover my fortress. I am convinced of this. For the proverb says:

Shrewd characters at sight
Can estimate aright
Their man, as some are deft
To gauge an ounce by heft."

Gold got terrified and with his followers, started on another track.

A large cat saw them and pounced at them all. Some mice who survived the slaughter found fault with Gold for picking a bad trail and sought shelter in the old fortress, drenching the floor with blood. Yes, there is wisdom in the story:

A deer there was that burst his bonds;
He flung the trap aside;
He violently broke apart
The hobbling snare that tied;

From woods uncouth with tufted flames
Around him bristling, fled;
The hunters' arrows left behind;
To seeming safety sped;

Into a well at last he tumbles:
On hostile fate all effort stumbles.

The holy man, perceiving that the floor was smeared with drops of blood, followed the trail to the fortress and began to dig with the pickaxe. As he dug, he hit upon the hoard over which Gold had lived for so long and the smell of which used to guide Gold back to the fortress. He was filled with glee and said, "Now, Crop-Ear, you may sleep in peace. It was the smell of this that enabled the mouse to play games with you." So they took the hoard and returned.

When Gold returned to his fortress, he was unable to bear the sad, disturbing sight. He reflected, "Ah, what shall I do? Where shall I go? How may I win peace of mind?" After much deliberation, he returned to the same cell with his followers, though troubled and lacking in vigor. When Crop-Ear heard the patter of the pack, he started striking his alms-bowl with the bamboo stick again.

The guest said, "My friend, why do you not sleep peacefully even now?" "Holy sir," he replied, "I am sure that villainous mouse has returned with his remaining followers. I do this from fear of him."

The guest laughed and said, "Have no fear my friend. His

jumping energy has gone with his property. This is the case with all living beings. As the saying goes:

The man has constant vigor? Dares
On others' backs to mount?
Speaks in a self-sufficient tone?
He has a bank account."

These words angered Gold and he made a desperate attack on the alms-bowl. But he missed and fell to the floor. The guest saw him and said to Crop-Ear, "Look, my friend! It is quite wonderful. You could put it to poetry:

The wealthy men are men of force;
And they are scholars all, of course:
The mouse who lost his wealthy store,
Is now a mouse and nothing more.

A fangless snake; an elephant
Without an ichor-store;
A man who lacks a cash account –
Are names and nothing more."

When Gold heard this, he reflected, "Alas! These words are true, though they come from my enemy. For today I have not the power to jump a mere finger's breadth. How cursed is the life of one without money! As the saying goes:

After money has departed,
If the wit is frail,
Then, like rills in summer weather,
Undertakings fail.

Forest-sesame, crow-barley,
Men who have no cash,
Owning names but lacking substance,
Are accounted trash.

Beggars have, no doubt, their virtues,
Yet they do not flash:
As the world has need of sunlight,
Virtues ask for cash.

Beggars-born less keenly suffer
Than the men who crash
From a life of comfort to a
Deficit of cash.

The sun that stuns the eyes that shun,
In vain he strains to see:
The light so bright is wrapped in night
By veils of poverty."

As Gold lamented thus, he saw his own hoard of wealth converted into a pillow for his enemy and at dawn, he crept into his fortress, feeling like an absolute failure.

Then his attendants retired and gossiped amongst themselves. "Look here," they said, "this fellow has no power to fill our bellies. There is no point paying him reverence anymore. For the proverb says:

A king from whom no bounties come,
But only buffets falls,
Had better be avoided and
By soldiers first of all."

Gold listened to all this chatter that was going on behind his back. When he returned to the fortress, not one of his followers accompanied him, for he was penniless. Feeling depressed, he began to ponder deeply, "A curse, a curse on a life of poverty! There is sound sense in the verse:

Even relatives are sure
Scornfully to treat the poor;
Pride is docked and virtue's moon
Loses luster, waning soon;
Friends that were, disgusted fly;
Sorrows breed and multiply;
Comes the imputation then
Of the sins of other men.

When man is crushed by poverty
And stricken down by fate,
His best friends become his foes,
And tried affection, hate.

Empty is the childless home;
Hearts that lack a friendship sure;
Wide horizons, to the fool;
All is empty to the poor.

His passions are entire; his name,
Keen wit and speech are just the same;
The man's the same. No! See his change!
Cash fails. The life is out! Ah, strange!

Now that my property is gone, my best course of action is to withdraw to the forest. I shan't take to beggary for:

Gutted by the forest fire,
Stands in sterile soil a tree,
Gnarled and riddled by the worms –
Better that than beggar be.

It is the shrine of wretchedness,
The dwelling-place of tears,
The thief of mind, the soil of doubts,
The treasury of fears.

Concreted meanness, home of woe,
And haughty honor's knell,
A form of death – to self-esteem
No different from hell.

A beggar is a man of shame,
Who bids farewell to honor's name;
From this, humiliations grow,
Then melancholy's gloomy woe;
But gloom with sadness dims the sense,
And sad men lack intelligence;
Now death is folly's certain fruit –
Thus, money's lack is evil's root.

Feed your body to the flames,
Friend, if you are needy;
Do not cringe to beg a dole
From the selfish-greedy.

Better roam in forest wilds
With the beasts of prey
Than, by whimpering for gifts,
Baseness to betray.

I shan't take to robbery either. That too is damnable, for it means appropriating what belongs to others. As the verse puts it:

Better let your tongue be tied
Than to know that you have lied;
Better to be impotent
Than adulterously bent;
Better die than take delight
In the petty pricks of spite;
Better beg as monk than feel
That you live by what you steal.

I refuse to live on charity, for that is damnable too. As the saying goes:

Parasite, or exiled scamp,
Invalid, or homeless tramp –
Life is death for these. The best
Would be death. For death is rest.

I must at any cost recover the very treasure that the holy guest has stolen. My money bag has been converted into a pillow for these two villains. I must regain my property and if I die in the attempt, it would still be worth the effort. For:

If cowards who see themselves despoiled
Too tamely feel the sting,
Their fathers in the world beyond
Will spurn their offering."

Having reached this conclusion, Gold the mouse, went to the cell at night and gnawed a hole in the bag after the holy guest had gone to sleep. But the holy guest awoke and struck him on the head with the bamboo stick. Gold somehow escaped death, further life being predestined for him. This is indeed true:

What's duly his, a man receives;
This law not even God can break;
My heart is not surprised, nor grieves;
For what is mine, no strangers take.

This fortuitous escape from death filled Gold with sudden contentment and peace. He felt confident that he was destined for something better. He was cured of his despondency and money-madness. Charged with freshness of spirit and vigor, he reflected:

'Not rank, but character, is birth;
It is not eyes, but wits, that see;
True learning 'tis, to cease from wrong;
Contentment is prosperity.

Yes, all prosperities are his,
Whose heart is filled with mirth:
The feet in leather sandals shod,
Travel a leather earth.

A hundred leagues is naught to him
Whose vehicle is greed:
To clasp the wealth that fingers touch
Contentment has no need.

His mind fully clear, Gold then returned to his cell, filled with positive thoughts about the future. At that time, a good friend of his visited him and suggested that they try to make a home in a different land. Taking this to be destiny's hand in bringing him a new life, Gold gladly accepted the proposal. His wise friend spoke further words of wisdom. He spoke about how whimsical wealth was and about the futility of attaching too much importance to its acquisition and preservation.

He shared lofty thoughts on focusing instead on the right conduct of life and said,

"Let some small rite – vow, fasting, self-control –
Be daily practised with a quiet soul;
For fate chips daily from our days to be,
Though panting life go struggling ceaselessly.

Contentment's nectar-draught supplies
The quiet joy that satisfies;
How can the money-maddened know
That joy in bustlings to and fro?

No penance like forbearance;
No pleasure like content;
No friend like gifts; no virtue
Like hearts on mercy bent."

Then his friend and he departed for another far-away, prosperous land, set up home there and lived happily ever after.



Principle

While a life of poverty is indeed wretched, no wise man should obsesses about making money. Optimism, confidence, clarity of thought and a positive attitude can carry us through the ups and downs of life. Good friends and contentment nourish the soul.

Book 3

Crows and Owls

The book commences with the verse:

Reconciled although he be,
Never trust an enemy.
For the cave of owls was burned,
When the crows with fire returned.

Before we get into this actual story, it is important to go over how the owls and crows became enemies in the first place.

Once upon a time the birds of a forest gathered for discussion. There were swans, cranes, nightingales, peacocks, plovers, owls, doves, pigeons, partridges and various others. They were in need of a king to govern them.

Observing that the owl had a venerable appearance, they all said, "Let this owl be our king." Everyone agreed and elaborate preparations began to anoint the owl king with appropriate pomp and ceremony. At that moment a crow came to the assembly, announcing his entrance with a raucous caw. He thought to himself, "Well, well! What does this grand celebration signify?"

When the birds saw him, they whispered amongst themselves, "He is the shrewdest of birds, they say. So let us listen to him. For the proverb says:

Concerted counsels of the wise,
If heedfully thought through,
Will never founder, being sound
From every point of view."

So the birds said to the crow, "We have no king and have therefore unanimously decided to anoint this owl as our supreme monarch. Please express your opinion in this matter. Your timing is perfect."

The crow laughed and said, "Gentlemen, this is foolish. When you have eminent cocks, nightingales, partridges, pigeons, cranes and others, why anoint this ugly owl who is blind at daytime? It seems wrong to me. For:

Ugly, cruel, full of spleen,
Every word he speaks is mean;
If you make the owl your king,
You will fail in everything."

After listening to these remarks, the birds said, "He speaks well. We must reconvene and discuss the question of a king all over again." They all flew away. Only the owl remained with his consort, for he was blind at daytime. There he sat in his chair, awaiting his anointment. He called out, "Hey there! Who is taking my orders? Why is the ceremony delayed?"

His consort said, "My dear sir, the crow has found a way to hold up the ceremony. The other birds have flown away. Only that crow remains here all alone. Come, I will conduct you home."

The owl felt deep disappointment and said, "You monster! Why have you wronged me by preventing my regal anointment? From this day on, there will be enmity between us. For the proverb says:

When arrows pierce or axes wound
A tree, it grows together sound;
From cruel, ugly speech you feel
A wound that time will never heal."

He then went home with his consort. The crow reflected, "Dear me! I have burdened myself with needless enmity by uttering such harsh words about the owl . I should have remembered:

All spoken words, if harsh and heedless
And inappropriate and needless,
Are self-condemnatory slips
That turn to poison on the lips.

However wise and strong you be,
Beware the needless enemy:
You would not swallow poison down
Because a doctor lives in town.

No man of sense vituperates
Another, while the public waits;
For even truth should be concealed,
If causing sorrow when revealed.

Reflect with many a chosen friend;
Reflect alone and to the end;
Then act. You are intelligent,
And fame's and wealth's recipient."

The crow then flew away. This is how the crows inherited feud with the owls.

And now for the main story.

In the southern part of the country is a city called Earth-Base. Near it stands a great banyan tree with countless branches. In the tree dwelt a crow-king named Cloudy with his large retinue of crows.

A rival king, a great owl named Foe-Crusher, had his fortress and residence in a mountain cave and also had a large retinue of owls. This owl-king cherished a grudge against crows, so that whenever he met a crow as he flew, he killed him and moved on. In this way his constant aggression gradually spread rings of dead crows around the banyan tree. This wasn't totally unexpected, for as the proverb says,

If you permit disease or foe
To march unheeded, you may know
That death awaits you, sure if slow.

One day Cloudy summoned all his counsellors and said, "Gentlemen, as you are aware, our enemy is arrogant, energetic and a good judge of occasions. He always comes at nightfall to wreak havoc on our ranks. How do we counter-attack? For we cannot see at night and in the daytime we cannot find his fortress, which is so well-hidden. If we could find the fortress, we would march in there and strike at them. What course of action shall we adopt? There are six possible ways to address this issue: peace, war, change of base, entrenchment, alliances and duplicity."

They replied, "Your Majesty does well to ponder this question. For the saying goes:

Good counsellors should tell their king,
Unasked, a profitable thing;
If asked, they should advise.
While flatterers who shun the truth
Are foemen in disguise.

Therefore it is now proper to confer in secret session."

Then Cloudy started to consult his five ancestral counsellors, whose names were Live-Again, Live-Well, Live-Along, Live-On and Live-Long. He first questioned Live-Again, "My worthy sir, what is your opinion under the circumstances?" Live-Again replied, "O King, one should not make war with a powerful enemy. This one is powerful and knows when to strike. Therefore make peace with him. For the saying goes:

Make your peace with powerful foes
Who are rich and good and wise,
Who are seasoned conquerors,
In whose home no discords rise.

Make your peace with wicked men,
If your life endangered be;
Life, itself first made secure,
Gives the realm security.

Make your peace with him whose wont
'Tis to conquer in a fight;
Other foes will bend their necks
To you, fearful of his might.

When no prize is won
And a healthy fight is sure,
Never stir a quarrel, but
Whatsoever the cost, endure.

Having heard this view, the king said to Live-Well, "My worthy sir, I desire to hear your opinion also." And Live-Well said, "O King, I disagree. Much as the enemy is cruel, greedy and

unprincipled, you should most certainly not make peace with him. For the proverb says:

With foes unprincipled and false
'Tis vain to seek accommodation:
Agreements bind them not; and soon
They show a wicked transformation.

Therefore you should, in my judgment, fight with him. For you know the saying:

'Tis easy to uproot a foe
Contemning fighters, never steady,
Cruel and greedy, slothful, false,
Foolish and fearful and unready.

And more than this, we have been humiliated by him. If you propose peace, he will be angry and will employ violence again. There is a saying:

Conciliation simply makes
A foeman's indignation splutter,
Like drops of water sprinkled on
A briskly boiling pan of butter.

Moreover, Live-Again's point of the strength of the enemy needs to be tested. For,

The smaller always slays the great
By showing energy and vigor:
The lion kills the elephant,
And rules with unrestricted rigor."

The king then turned to Live-Along. "My worthy sir, please express your opinion also." Live-Along replied, "O King, the enemy is vicious and powerful and unscrupulous. So you should make neither peace nor war with him. Only a change of base will work. For the saying goes:

With vicious foemen, proud of power,
From hindering scruples free,
Adopt a change of base, not peace
Nor war, for victory.

Therefore since you are engaged with a powerful foe, there is occasion for a change of base. It is no time for peace or war."

The king then said to Live-On, "My worthy sir, please express your opinion also." Live-On said, "O King, I disapprove of all the three - peace, war and change of base." I am especially against change of base. For:

A crocodile at home
Can beat an elephant;
But if he goes abroad,
A dog can make him pant.

If, panic-struck, you flee
When foes are at the door,
And leave the land to them,
You never will see it more.

The union of the weak
A powerful bully stumps:
The hostile blizzard spares
The shrubs that grow in clumps."

The king then turned to Live-Long and said, "My worthy sir, please express your opinion also." Live-Long said, "O King, of the six possibilities, I recommend alliance. Please adopt that. For the saying goes:

Though deft and brilliant, what good end
Can you attain without a friend?
The fire that seems immortal will
Die when the fanning wind is still.

Therefore you should stay at home and seek some competent ally; so you can confidently attack the enemy. If you abandon your home, no one will even speak with you as a friend. For the proverb says:

The wind is friend to forest-fire
And causes it to flame the higher;
The same wind blows a candle out.
Who cares what poor folk are about?

It isn't even necessary that the ally be powerful; the alliance even of meek folk makes for defense. You know the saying:

However weak, a bamboo stem
From others takes, and gives to them
Strength to resist uprooting: so
Weak kings unite against a foe.

And how much more so, if you make alliance with the truly great. Thus O King, you cannot match the enemy's might save through alliance. This is my opinion."

Having listened to all this, Cloudy then bowed low before an elderly, farsighted counsellor of his race. This was a crow who

was the very embodiment of ethics and principles. His name was Live-Strong. "Father," said the king, "I had a secret purpose in questioning the others in your very presence; namely, that you might listen to everything and instruct me as to what would work best in these circumstances. Please instruct me in the appropriate course of action."

Live-Strong said, "My son, all that your other counsellors have proposed is drawn from the textbooks of social ethics and each has its merits and is best suited to specific situations. But the present hour demands duplicity. You have heard of the saying:

You must regard with like distrust
Both peace and warlike measures; must
Seek through duplicity your goal,
With powerful foes of evil soul.

In this way those who themselves trust nobody and have their eye on self-interest can win the trust of an enemy and easily destroy them. For the saying goes:

To foe, to false friend, to female
(one who is for sale)
The man so simple as to give
Straightforward conduct, does not live.

A hermit mastering his soul
May see life simple, see it whole;
Not those who thirst for carnal things,
Nor, most particularly, kings.

And when a vulnerable point appears in him, you will destroy it by being aware of it."

Cloudy said, "But Father, I do not know his residence. How shall I become aware of a vulnerable point?"

Live-Strong replied, "My son, through spies. I will reveal not only his dwelling, but also his vulnerable point. For:

The king, well-served by spies, who knows
The functionaries of his foes,
Who knows his retinue no less,
Is never plunged in deep distress."

Then Cloudy said, "Father, what are these functionaries? What is their number? And what is the character of these secret-service men? Please tell me."

Live-Strong replied, "The term "functionary" implies a delegated task. If this be shamefully performed, it ruins the king; if admirably, it brings him high success. The functionaries in the hostile camp are: the counsellor, the chaplain, the commander-in-chief, the crown prince, the concierge, the treasurer, the war-minister and so forth. By sowing intrigue among them, the enemy is subdued. I will myself lead the way to conquer the enemy. I will deceive them and put them in a fatal situation. For,

Is any man uncheated by
New servants' diligence,
The praise of guests, the maiden's tears,
And roguish eloquence?

I also have something else to tell you which you must consider, ponder over and do."

"Father," said Cloudy, "tell me what you have in mind." Live-Strong said, "Listen my son. I have discovered a fifth device, different from the well-known four: conciliation, intrigue,

bribery and fighting. And it is this. You must turn against me, revile me with the harshest words you can find, smear me with blood (which you will be provided) in order to deceive the enemy's spies, throw me out at the foot of this banyan tree and then depart to Antelope Mountain. There you must stay with your retinue until by clever planning I win the trust of the enemy, discover the heart of their fortress and kill them; for they are blind in the daytime. This plan I have devised on the assumption that their fortress is of simple construction, without any egress at the rear. For the saying goes:

A fort must have for egress, say
The specialists, a gap;
If this be lacking, it is not
A fortress, but a trap.

You should not feel any pity for me. For the proverb says:

Pet and pamper servants well;
Love them as you love your life:
Yet consider them as dry
Tinder in the hour of strife."

With these words he started a sham fight with the king. Cloudy's retinue, seeing Live-Strong jabber with unbridled license at the king, started to attack Live-Strong. Cloudy said, "Out of my path, all of you. I take upon myself the chastisement of this traitor and scoundrel." With this he pounced upon him, pecked at him gently, smeared him with blood that he was provided and departed with his retinue for Antelope Mountain, as Live-Strong had recommended.

At this juncture the owl's consort, acting as spy for the enemy, went and reported in detail to the owl-king the disgrace of Cloudy's prime minister. Thus informed, the owl-king started

with his retinue at sundown on a crow-hunt. He said, "Hasten friends, hasten! The enemy is panic-stricken, is in full flight and can be readily caught. For the proverb says:

In flight, a fort becomes a trap
Where all defense is lacking;
'Tis easy then to beat a king
Whose men are busy packing."

With this battle-cry they flew to attack the banyan tree. Failing to find a single crow, King Foe-Crusher gleefully perched on a branch and while the court poets chanted flatteries, he gave orders: "Hey there! Discover their line of retreat. Before they establish themselves in a fort, I will be at their heels and will kill them."

At this point Live-Strong reflected, "If the enemy simply return after learning of our deed, I shall have accomplished nothing. For the proverb says:

The first or second evidence
Of genuine intelligence
Is – leave a business unbegun,
Or, if begun, then see it done.

It would have been better not to have undertaken this than to see the undertaking fail. I will reveal myself by letting them hear me caw."

So he cawed with a feeble squeak. On hearing this, the owls pounced on him and tried to kill him. But Live-Strong said, "Gentlemen, I am Cloudy's minister, Live-Strong, reduced to this state by Cloudy himself. Please inform your king. I have much to discuss with him."

So the owl-king, informed by his followers, came, beheld with astonishment the scars of many wounds, and said, "Well sir! How did you fall into this condition? Tell me."

Live-Strong said, "O King, listen. Yesterday that rascal Cloudy, seeing how many crows you had killed, was distracted by wrath and grief and started for your fortress. I told him, "You should not march against him. For they are strong and we are weak. The proverb advises those who wish to thrive:

Do not, even in thought, offend
Stronger foes who will not bend;
They will feel no loss or shame;
You will die, a moth in flame.

You should seek peace by paying him tribute." When he heard this, he was made furious by rascally advisers, suspected me of being an ally of yours and reduced me to this state. Your royal feet are now my sole refuge. As soon as I regain my health, I will conduct you to his abode and cause the total destruction of the crows."

On hearing this, Foe-Crusher consulted with the counsellors who had served his father and his grandfather. They were five in number and their names were Red-Eye, Fierce-Eye, Flame-Eye, Hook-Nose and Wall-Ear.

He first questioned Red-Eye, "My worthy sir, what is to be done under the circumstances?" Red-Eye replied, "O King, what is there to consider here? Kill him without hesitation. For the proverb says:

Kill a weakling, lest he grow
Hard to smite;
Later, with augmented power
He will fight.

Also, as common people say, "A lost chance brings a curse."

He who will not when he may,
When he will, he shall have nay.

The king asked Fierce-Eye, "My worthy sir, what is your opinion?" Fierce-Eye said, "O King, his advice is heartless. For one does not kill a suppliant. He is pledging his support to us and we must treat him with respect."

The king turned to Flame-Eye and asked, "What is your opinion, sir, with matters standing where they do?" Flame-Eye said, "One can gain advantage from a benefactor, even if he is a thief. From a suppliant guest, we should reap even greater gains. Besides, having been maltreated by them, he will labor for our success, or for the revelation of their vulnerable point. He should therefore not be killed."

Having listened to this view, Foe-Crusher questioned another counsellor, Hook-Nose, "My worthy sir, what should be done under the present circumstances?" Hook-Nose answered, "O King, he should not be killed. One may expect relief from enemies if discord befalls their host. I agree with the others that it is against our principles to slay a suppliant."

The king turned to Wall-Ear, "What is your view sir? Tell me." Wall-Ear said, "O King, he should certainly not be killed. For if you spare his life, you may grow fond of each other and spend time pleasantly. For it is good to be quick with mutual defense and with honest give and take."

Foe-Crusher, having heard all the views, agreed that Live-Strong should be allowed to live. Red-Eye, seeing that the matter was closed, continued his remarks with a quiet sneer, "Alas! Alas! Our lord the king has been wickedly done to death by you gentlemen. For the proverb says:

Where honor is withheld or paid
Mistakenly, 'tis clear
Three things have unrestricted course:
Famine, death and fear.

It argues utter want of sense
To pardon obvious offense.

We are certainly uprooted and undone. For the proverb is right in saying:

Shrewd men unmask a foe
Who seems a friend,
Whose speech is kind, whose acts
To hatred tend.

Before fools' counsel flees
Prosperity, though won;
Its place and time are lost,
Like dark before the sun."

But they all disregarded his advice, picked Live-Strong up and started to carry him to their fortress. On the journey Live-Strong said, "O King, I have rendered you no favor yet and I am in a sorry state. Why are you so kind to me? No, I desire to enter the blazing fire. Please provide a fire for me."

Red-Eye shrewdly realised his purpose and said, "Why do you wish to enter fire?" Live-Strong replied, "I have been plunged into this calamity by Cloudy. Therefore I wish to be reborn as an owl in order to take revenge on the crows." Red-Eye, being a master of diplomacy, rejoined, "My dear sir, you are wily and sound plausible. However, even if you were reborn as an owl, you would always hold your prior family, the crows, in high esteem. For it is very hard to beat one's own nature."

But the owls paid no attention to Red-Eye's reasoning and took the crow to their fortress, to the destruction of their race. Along the journey, Live-Strong laughed in triumph in his heart and said:

The secrets of diplomacy
To him alone were plain
Who, instant in his master's cause,
Advised that I be slain.

If they were to take his advice, not the slightest misfortune would befall them."

When they came to the fortress gate, Foe-Crusher said, "Come, my friends! Give Live-Strong whatever chamber he prefers, for he is our well-wisher."

Live-Strong, hearing this, reflected, "I must now devise a plan for their destruction. This would not be possible if I lived in their midst. For they would observe my actions that betray my purpose. Only by remaining near the gate can I accomplish what I desire."

He therefore said to the owl-king: "O King, what you have said is eminently right. Yet I know that even one who is loyal and pure of purpose should not dwell in the heart of the fortress. I will therefore take my place here at the fortress gate and pay daily homage to you, my great benefactor."

To this the owl-king agreed and his efficient caterers gave Live-Strong daily food; delicious meats of all varieties. In a few days he grew strong and regained all his lost vigor.

Red-Eye, amazed to see how Live-Strong was being pampered, said to the counsellors and to the king himself, "Oh My! These counsellors are a pack of fools and so are you sir. I cannot think otherwise. This crow is making a fool of all of you with all his planned actions."

Yet, for fate was hostile to them, they disregarded Red-Eye's counsel, sound as it was and continued to pamper Live-Strong with various meats and delicacies.

Red-Eye called his personal followers and said to them privately, "The end is in sight. The welfare of our king and his fortress is doomed. I have done my job of giving him such counsel as an ancestral counsellor should give. Let us now, for our part, seek another fortress in the mountains. For:

Joy comes from knowing what to dread,
And sorrow smites the dunderhead.

Take this to heart and come with me." And Red-Eye, having made his decision, departed for another fortress, accompanied by his retinue of followers.

At Red-Eye's departure, Live-Strong was overjoyed. He reflected, "Very good, indeed. Red-Eye's flight is a blessing to us. For he was farsighted, while the rest are dullards. I can easily destroy them now. For the proverb says:

If no farsighted counsellors,
Long-tried, secure,
Aid him, the downfall of a king
Is swift and sure.

The shrewd discover enemies
Disguised as friends
In senseless counsellors whose speech
To evil tends."

Following these reflections, each day he dropped one piece of wood from the forest into his own nest, with the ultimate purpose of setting the cave afire. The owls, poor fools, failed to perceive that he was building his nest in order to burn them alive. There is sense in the saying:

Cause your friends no bitter woes;
Do not fraternize with foes:
Friends, when lost, are friends no more;
Enemies were lost before.

Thus, pretending to build a nest, Live-Strong constructed a woodpile at the fortress gate. At sunrise, when the owls became blind, he hastened to where Cloudy now lived and said, "My lord and king, I have prepared the enemy's cave for burning. Come with your retinue, each bringing a lighted piece of wood from the forest, to throw on my nest at the gate of the cave. All your foes will thus perish in torment.

Cloudy was delighted to hear this and said, "Father, tell me your adventures. It has been a long while since we met." "No, my son," said Live-Strong. "This is no time for talk. Some enemy spy might possibly report my journey to see you. Our blind enemy, thus informed, might make his escape. Make haste, make haste! For the proverb says:

When speed is needful, ne'er permit
Delay, but do it pat;
Else, wrathful gods are sure to strike
The undertaking flat.

Whatever deed you have in mind
(Especially when fate is kind),
Do quickly. If you wait a bit,
Then time will suck the juice of it.

Later, when your enemies are slain and you have returned to your home, I will tell you the whole story at leisure and with humor.

So Cloudy and his followers, taking Live-Strong's advice, seized one lighted piece of wood each, in their bills, flew to the gate of the cave and threw the wood on Live-Strong's nest. Then all the owls (being blind in the daytime) remembered Red-Eye's counsel as they suffered the torture. Thus Cloudy exterminated his foes and returned to his old fortress in the banyan tree.

There he mounted the lion-throne and with a heart overflowing with joy, he questioned Live-Strong in the midst of a full session at his court, "Father, how did you pass time when in the midst of the enemy? For the proverb says:

Better a plunge in blazing fire
(The righteous know)
Than momentary contact with
A wicked foe."

Live-Strong replied, 'My lord and king!
Whatever path provides escape
When danger's face is seen,
With clear decision follow, if
It noble seem, or mean.

The wise and strong, awaiting days
More prosperous, must grant
Obedience to wicked lords
Whose speech is adamant.

The prudent, hopeful man should act
As suits an evil case,
Should steel his heart to carry through
A holy deed, or base.

The wise, alert, ambitious man,
If he expect success,
Must wait on fortune, watch his step
And curb his stateliness."

"Father," said Cloudy, "this dwelling with an enemy seems to me like the greatest ordeal." "So it is," said Live-Strong. "But never have I seen such a pack of fools anywhere. Not one had any sense except Red-Eye. He indeed has great capacity, an intelligence not blunted by his extensive scientific attainments. He discovered my exact purpose. As for the other counsellors, they were great fools, making a living by a mere pretense of giving good counsel, practicing no steadfastness to truth. They were not even aware of these basic truths:

'Tis ruinous to trust the scamps
Who come to you from hostile camps;
Such rivals you should chase away,
For constant trouble does not pay.

The foeman serving as a scout,
Who knows (by bobbing in and out)
Your favored chair, familiar bed,
And how you drink and what you're fed,
Your travels to another town –
Will strike his heedless foeman down.

Who, ill-advised, does not commit
Grave faults of savoir faire?
What glutton has not much unrest
Within himself to bear?
Whom does not fortune render proud?
Whom does not death lay low?

To whom do not possessions bring
Abundant harm and woe?

The steady forfeit glory, while
The restless forfeit friends;
The bankrupt forfeits family,
The banker, better ends;
The man of passion forfeits books,
The fawner, friendship's flower;
The king with careless counsellors
Must forfeit kingly power.

"Yes, O King, I have experienced first-hand what you were kind enough to put into words. That association with the enemy puts one in a most dangerous ordeal."

Live-Strong then said, "Thus, O King, through the power of intelligence and meticulous planning, I exterminated the enemy. There is much wisdom in this:

The forest-fire leaves roots entire,
Though trunks remain a shell;
The flooding pool of water cool
Uproots the roots as well."

"Very true," said Cloudy. "And besides:

This is the greatness of the great
Whom gems of wisdom decorate;
Despite what hurts and hinders, too,
They see an undertaking through."

"Very true," said Live-Strong. "And once again:

The final penny of a debt,
The final foeman dire,
The final twinges of disease,
The final spark of fire –
Finality on these imposed
Leaves nothing to desire.

O King, you are truly fortunate. For your undertaking has had final success. Indeed, valor is not sufficient to end a matter. Victory is wisdom's business. As the proverb says:

'Tis not the sword that destroys a foe,
'Tis wit that utterly lays low:
Swords kill the body; wit destroys
Fame, family and regal joys.

Thus success comes with minimum effort to a man of wisdom and courage. For

Wisdom broods o'er the inception;
Memory does not fail;
Means appear to predilection;
Counsels wise prevail;
Sparkles fruitful meditation;
Mind attains its height;
Joy achieves its consummation
In a worthy fight.

Thus kingship belongs to the man possessing prudence, capacity for self-sacrifice and courage. As the verse puts it:

Associate in full delight
With someone who is wise,
Self-sacrificing, brave; thereby
Win virtue as a prize;
On virtue follows money; and
On money follows fame;
Then, personal authority;
And then, the kingly name."

Cloudy replied, "It is wonderful how immediate is the reward of knowing social ethics. By mastering this you masterminded and exterminated Foe-Crusher with his retinue."

Live-Strong replied:

Where at last you need sharp measures,
First try gentle measures there:
Thus the lofty, lordly tree-trunk
Is not felled without prayer.

And yet O King, why say of a future matter either that it involves no effort or that it is not readily attainable? There is wisdom in the saying:

Since words with actions fail to suit,
The timidly irresolute
Who see a thousand checks and blocks
Turn into public laughingstocks.

Also, thoughtful men are never heedless even in minor matters. For:

The negligent who say:
'Some day, some other day –
The thing is petty, small;
Demands no thought at all,'
Are heedless, headed straight
For that repentant state
That ever comes too late.

But as for my master who has overcome his foes, he may sleep tonight as soundly as ever he did. You know the saying:

In houses, where no snakes are found,
One sleeps; or where the snakes are bound:
But perfect rest is hard to win
With serpents bobbing out and in.

A noble purpose to attain
Desiderates extended pain,
Asks man's full greatness, pluck and care,
And loved ones aiding with a prayer.
Yet if it climb to heart's desire,
What man of pride and fighting fire,
Of passion and of self-esteem
Can bear the unaccomplished dream?
His heart indignantly is bent
(Through its achievement) on content.

Therefore my heart is at peace for I saw the undertaking

through. Therefore may you now long enjoy this kingdom free from worries, safeguard your people and enjoy long-lasting glory. Remember:

A king should bring his people ease,
But he should also aim to please;
His reign is else of little note,
A neck-teat on a female goat.

Nor must you, in the thought, "My kingdom is won," shatter your soul with the intoxication of glory. This is because the power of kings is always uncertain. Kingly glory is as hard to climb as a bamboo-stem; hard to hold, ready to disappear in a moment. It is sure to slip away at last; is as mutable as the wind's path; untrustworthy as rogues' friendship; as hard to tame as a serpent; fragile by nature, like the bubbles on water; lost in the moment of attainment, like the treasure of a dream.

And no man in the wide world is beyond the clutch of fate and impending doom.

The king, his counsellors,
His maidens gay,
His golden groves, Fate stings.
They sink away.

Thus, having won kingly glory, take delight in it but trust in wisdom only."

And thus the story "Crows and Owls" comes to an end.
Reconciled although he be,
Never trust an enemy.
For the cave of owls was burned,
When the crows with fire returned.



Principle

Success comes with minimum effort to a man of wisdom who possesses prudence, good judgment, courage and the capacity for self-sacrifice. Mastering social ethics can see one through the toughest of crises. Good counsellors are priceless.

Story 29

The Cave That Talked

There was once a lion, named Rough-Claw who lived in the forest. One day he found nothing to eat in his wanderings and he became very hungry. At sunset he came to a great mountain cave and went in, for he thought, "Surely, some animal will enter this cave at night. I shall hide and wait."

Presently, the owner of the cave, a jackal named Curd-Face came to the door and began to sing, "Cave ahoy! Cave aho-o-oy!" After a moment's silence, he continued in the same tone, "Hello! Don't you remember how you and I made an agreement that I would speak to you whenever I returned and that you would sing out to me? But you aren't speaking to me today. So I am going off to the other cave which is bound to return my greeting."

When he heard this, the lion thought, "I see. This cave always calls out a greeting when the fellow returns. But today, scared of me, it doesn't say a word. This is natural enough. For

The feet and hands refuse to act
When peril terrifies;
A trembling seizes every limb;
And speech unuttered dies.

I shall myself call out a greeting, which he will follow to its source and I will get my dinner."

Thereupon the lion called out a greeting. The cave magnified

the roar so much that its echo filled the entire horizon; terrifying even other forest creatures who lived far away. The jackal ran away, repeating the stanza:

Joy comes from knowing what to dread,
And sorrow smites the dunderhead:
A long life through, the woods I've walked,
But never heard a cave that talked.



Principle

A little prudence, careful thought and planning can save one from many a danger. It is important to have a clear assessment of the danger inherent in any situation, to gauge one's ability to handle it and to act in accordance.

Story 30

The Frogs That Rode Snakeback

There was once an elderly black snake Slow-Poison who lived in a certain spot. One day he reflected, "There must be some way to get along in this world without overtaxing myself." An idea struck him and he went to a pond that contained many frogs. He looked down at them and acted very dejected.

As he waited thus, a frog came to the edge of the water and asked, "Uncle, why don't you run around for food today, as you normally do?"

"My dear friend," said Slow-Poison, "I am in deep trouble. How can I wish for food? This evening, as I was bustling about for food, I saw a frog and leapt to catch him. But he saw me and quickly hid behind some men and boys who were bathing in the pond. As I was searching for this frog, my eye caught the toe of a boy that looked just like a frog. I bit it and the boy died immediately. The boy's father cursed me in his anguish and said, 'Monster! Since you bit my innocent child, you shall pay for this sin by becoming a vehicle of frogs and shall have to subsist on whatever they offer you.' That is why I have now come here to serve as your vehicle."

The frog reported this to all the others. They were all delighted and reported the matter to their king, Water-Foot. He in turn, accompanied by his counsellors, rose hurriedly from the pond, for this was an extraordinary occurrence and climbed upon Slow-Poison's hood. The others also climbed onto his back. Those who couldn't find space on his back just hopped along behind him.

Slow-Poison, being shrewd, first showed them fancy tricks in great variety. The next day, he started moving slowly. So Water-Foot asked, "My dear Slow-Poison, why don't you carry us as you did earlier?"

Slow-Poison replied, "O King, I have no power to carry everyone today because I haven't eaten anything." "My dear fellow," said the king, "eat the plebian frogs."

When Slow-Poison heard this, he quivered with joy and quickly said, "Oh, that is a part of the curse laid on me. I am greatly pleased with your command." So he ate frogs uninterruptedly and in a few days he grew strong. With delight and laughing inwardly he said:

The trick was good. All sorts of frogs
Within my power have passed.
The only question that remains,
Is: How long will they last?

Water-Foot remained completely fooled and did not notice a thing. At that moment, another black snake arrived on the scene. Amazed at the sight of Slow-Poison being used as a vehicle by the frogs, he said, "Partner, they are our natural food, yet they use you as a vehicle. This is hard for me to digest." And Slow-Poison simply smiled and said, "I am marking time." Water-Foot heard this and inquired, "What does this mean sir?" "Nothing at all," said Slow-Poison coolly. And foolish Water-Foot failed to perceive his treacherous purpose.

Slow-Poison then slowly ate them all and not one frog was left in that pond.



Principle

When adversity strikes, enduring the enemy may bring some relief. Blindly trusting a natural enemy can be fatal.

Bear even foes upon your back;
When fortune clogs
Your path, endure. The great black snake
Slew many frogs.

Story 31

The Pious Man, The Thief and The Ghost

There was once a poor, pious man in a certain place. He lived on charity and always spurned luxury of any kind. One merchant once took pity on him and gave him two calves. The pious man took excellent care of them and fed them butter, oil and fodder of various kinds. The calves eventually grew plump.

Then a thief saw them and an idea occurred to him, "I will steal these two cows from this pious man." So he took a rope and set out at night. On the way he met an ugly looking man who looked very scary. When the thief saw him, he asked with fear, "Who are you, sir?"

The man replied, "I am a ghost named Truthful. Who are you?" The thief said, "I am a thief and I perform cruel acts. I am on my way to steal two cows from a pious man."

The ghost felt relieved and said, "My dear sir, I take one man every three days. So I shall eat this pious man today. I am glad that I met you."

Together they went to the pious man's house, hid behind a tree and awaited the opportune moment. When the man went to sleep, the ghost jumped forward to eat him. But the thief stopped him saying, "Sir, this is not right. You are not to eat the man until I have stolen his cows."

The ghost said, "The resulting racket will wake the man. And all my effort will then be in vain."

"But on the other hand," said the thief, "if any trouble arises

when you start to eat him, then I cannot steal the two cows. So I will first steal the cows and you may eat the man later."

So they disputed, each crying, "Me first! Me first!" As the argument became more heated, their raised voices woke the pious man up. The thief then addressed him, "Sir, this is a ghost who wishes to eat you." And the ghost said, "Sir, this is a thief who wishes to steal both your cows."

When the man heard this, he stood up and looked at both of them closely. He knew of a prayer that helped him get rid of ghosts. He uttered the prayer and the ghost disappeared. He then lifted a club and drove the thief away, thus saving both his cows.



Principle

When there is discord between one's enemies, one can only stand to gain.

From enemies expect relief,
If discord pierce their host;
Thus, life was given by the thief
And cattle by the ghost

Story 32

How the Rabbit Fooled the Elephant

In a certain part of a forest lived an elephant king named Four-Tusk, who had a large following. He protected his herd well.

Once there occurred a twelve-year drought; so tanks, ponds, swamps and lakes went dry. All the elephants then said to the king, "O King, our little ones are so tortured by thirst that many are likely to die. Please devise some way to alleviate our suffering." The king sent elephants in all directions to search for water.

Those who went east found beside a path near a hermitage a lake named Lake of the Moon. It was beautiful with swans, cranes, ospreys and other water creatures. Beautiful blossoms adorned its banks. It brimmed with water and seemed like paradise. The elephants hastened back to the king to report what they had found.

On hearing their report, Four-Tusk travelled with them to the Lake of the Moon. Finding a gentle slope all around the lake, the elephants marched on, crushing the heads, necks, fore-paws and hind-paws of thousands of rabbits who had made their home on the banks for many years. After drinking and bathing, the elephant king departed with his followers.

The rabbits who were left alive held an emergency convention. "What are we to do now?" they said. "Those cursed fellows will come here every day. We must frame some plan to prevent their return."

A wise rabbit named Victory felt great compassion for his fellow rabbits who had lost sons, wives and relatives. He said,

"Have no fear my friends. They shall not return. I promise it. For my guardian angel has granted me this grace."

Hearing this, the rabbit king said to Victory, "Dear friend, I cannot thank you enough. For

Good Victory knows every fact
The textbooks teach; knows how to act
In every place and time. Where he
Is sent, there comes prosperity.

Speak for pleasure, speak with measure,
Speak with grammar's richest treasure,
Not too much and with reflection –
Deeds will follow words' direction.

The elephants, sir, are bound to be impressed by your ripe wisdom. They will thus develop high regard for me. For the proverb says:

The envoy binds; he loosens what is bound;
Through him success in war, if found, is found.

Depart then, dear friend. May the guardian angel protect you."

So Victory departed and spotted the elephant king as he was preparing to return to the lake. The king looked majestic and regal. Victory reflected, "It is impossible for folk like me to get anywhere near the king. For the proverb says:

An elephant will kill you if
He touch; a serpent if he sniff;
King's laughter has a deadly sting;
A rascal kills by honoring.

I must seek a safe terrain before introducing myself."

After these reflections, he climbed upon a tall, jagged rock pile and asked, "O lord of the two-tusked breed, I hope you are doing well." Hearing this, the elephant peered narrowly and said, "Who are you sir?" "I am an envoy," said the rabbit. "In whose service?" asked the elephant and the envoy answered, "In the service of the blessed Moon." "State your business," said the elephant king and the rabbit replied, "You are aware, sir, that no harm may be inflicted on an envoy who is discharging his duty. There is a proverb:

Though swords be out and kinsmen fall in strife,
The king still spares the harsh-tongued envoy's life.

Therefore, by command of the Moon I ask you, "Why, O mortal, why have you used violence upon others, with no true reckoning of your own power or your foe's? For the Scripture says:

All those who madly march to deeds,
Not reckoning who are masters,
Themselves or powerful enemies,
Are asking for disasters.

You have sinfully violated the Lake of the Moon. And there you have slain rabbits who are under my special protection, who are of the race of the rabbit king who is very close to me. This is iniquitous. Desist from such actions or great disaster will befall you. But if from this hour you desist, great distinction will be yours; for your body will be nourished by my moon light and you may lead a happy, carefree life with your companions. Otherwise, my light shall be withheld, your body will be scorched by summer heat and you along with your companions will perish."

On hearing this, the elephant king felt his heart stagger and

after much reflection said, "It is true sir. I have sinned against the blessed Moon. Who am I to contend with one like him? Please point to me quickly the way that I must travel to win the blessed Moon's forgiveness."

The rabbit said, "Come sir, alone. I will point it out to you." So he went by night to the Lake of the Moon and showed him the moon reflected in the water. There was the brilliant, quivering disk of lustrous loveliness.

Seeing this the elephant said, "I purify myself and bow to the Moon Lord." He dropped his trunk into the water and thereby disturbed it. The moon's disk danced to and fro as if mounted on a whirling wheel and he saw a thousand moons.

Victory looked agitated and said to the king, "Woe to you, O King! You have doubly enraged the Moon." The elephant asked bewildered, "Why is the blessed Moon angry with me?"

"Because," said Victory, "you have touched this water." So the elephant king, with drooping ears, bowed his head in deep obeisance in order to win forgiveness from the blessed Moon. And he spoke again to Victory, "My worthy sir, please make sure that the Moon forgives me for everything. I shall never return here again." With these words he returned to his own place.



Principle

Feigning commission from men of power can better one's condition and help achieve many a task.

The feigning of a great commission
Immensely betters your condition:
Feigning a message from the moon,
The rabbits dwelt in comfort soon.

Story 33

The Snake and the Ants

In a certain ant-hill there lived a large black snake named Haughty. One day, instead of following the beaten path out of his hole, he tried to crawl through a narrower crevice. In doing so, he suffered a wound since his body was huge and the opening was too small.

Then the ants gathered around him, drawn by the smell of blood from the wound and drove him frantic. They stung him at every spot on his body. The snake who had once crushed so many of them, was no match for their numbers in his wounded state. And Haughty perished.



Principle

Even though men as individuals may be weak, as a crowd, especially when enraged, they can be formidable.

Beware the populace enraged;
A crowd's a fearsome thing:
The ants devoured the giant snake
For all his quivering.

Story 34

The Bird with Golden Dung

There was once a great tree on a mountain side. On it lived a bird in whose dung gold appeared.

One day a hunter came to the spot and the bird dropped its dung directly in front of him. The dung turned into gold immediately. At this the hunter was amazed.

"Well, well!" said he. "I have never seen gold in a bird's dung all my life." So he set a snare in the tree. The bird, being a fool, forgot the danger and perched himself at his customary spot. He got caught immediately.

The hunter then freed him from the snare, put him in a cage and took him home. But he reflected, "This is indeed a peculiar bird. If someone saw it in my possession, they might report the matter to the king. It is better that I take the bird to the king myself and report this peculiarity to him." And so he did.

When the king saw the bird, his eyes lit up and he felt very happy. "Come here guardsmen," he said. "Look after this bird carefully. Give him everything that he needs to eat and drink."

A counsellor in the king's court said, "This bird was after all hatched from an egg. Why keep him? You have no evidence except the word of a mere hunter. How can gold ever appear in bird-dung? This is nonsense. Just take the bird from the cage and set him free."

The counsellor's words sounded rational to the king and he freed the bird. The bird then flew to the arch of the tall door where no one could reach him and dropped dung which was of

gold. He then recited the stanza:

I played the fool at first; then he
Who had me on his tether;
And then the king and counsellor –
We are all fools together.

He then flew away, delighted at his narrow escape.



Principle

One should always think for oneself. A king surrounded by a pack of fools misses many a good opportunity.

Story 35

The Cat's Judgment

A crow once lived in a certain tree. Beneath the same tree dwelt another bird, a partridge. The two became close friends. They spent their evenings sharing tales of wit, solving puzzles and exchanging presents.

One day the partridge went with other birds in search of food and did not return at nightfall. The crow missed him greatly and thought, "Alas! Why does my friend the partridge not come home tonight? I am afraid he is caught in some trap or may have been killed." Many days passed while the crow continued to grieve.

One evening, a rabbit named Speedy made himself at home in the partridge's old nest in the hole. The crow didn't object to this since he was not sure of when the partridge would return.

One day, the partridge, who had grown plump from eating food that he had found in abundance in his travels, remembered his old home and returned. This is indeed no cause for wonder .

No mortal has such joy, although
In heaven's fields he roam,
As in his city, in his land,
And in his humble home.

When he saw the rabbit in the hole, he said reproachfully, "Come now, rabbit, you have committed a shameful act in occupying my home. Please leave immediately."

"You fool!" said the rabbit, "don't you know that a dwelling belongs to you only if you live in it?" "Very well then," said the partridge, "let us consult with our neighbors. For the saying goes:

When house or field or well or grove
Or land is in dispute,
A neighbor's testimony is
Decisive of the suit."

The rabbit replied, "Have you not heard of the dictum:

The title to possession is
A ten years' habitation
With men. But with birds and beasts
Mere present habitation.

So even if this hole belongs to you, it was unoccupied when I moved in and it is therefore mine at this point."

"Well, well!" replied the partridge, "let us consult the specialists. They shall decide."

The two started off together to have their suit decided. The crow followed them. "I will see what comes of all this," he said to himself.

They had not travelled too far when the rabbit asked the partridge, "My good fellow, who is to pass judgment on our disagreement?" The partridge answered, "On a sand bank by the river, there dwells a tomcat named Curd-Ear. He leads a life of penance and self-denial. His character is without blemish."

When the rabbit spied the cat, his soul was filled with fear and he said, "No, no! He is a seedy rascal. You must have heard of the proverb:

Oh, never trust a rogue for all
His pharisaic puzzling:
At holy shrines some saints are found
Quite capable of guzzling."

On hearing this, Curd-Ear, who had adopted this way of life simply to make an easy livelihood, decided to work hard to win their confidence. He gazed straight at the sun, stood on his hind legs, lifted his fore-paws, blinked his eyes and in order to deceive them with pious statements, delivered the following moral discourse, "Alas! Alas! All is vanity. This fragile life passes in a moment. Union with one's beloved is but an empty dream. Family endearments are a conjurer's trick. The life of a renounced sage is the only way out. As the scripture says:

Each transitory day, O man,
To moral living give;
Else, like the blacksmith's bellows, you
Suck air, but do not live."

To this the rabbit said, "Friend partridge, here is indeed a saint who expounds the moral law. Let us ask him."

But the partridge said, "After all, he is our natural enemy. Let us ask him from a distance." So together they began to question him: "O holy sir, a dispute has arisen between us. Please give judgment in accordance with the moral law. And you may eat whichever of us speaks falsehood."

"Dear friends," said the cat, "I implore you not to speak thus. My heart abhors all forms of cruelty. No, no, I shall eat nobody. However, I am quite old and am unable to distinguish your voices from a distance. How will I then determine winner and loser? So please draw nearer and share with me the facts of your case. I shall then pronounce a judgment that addresses the essence of the matter. You know the verse:

If any man, from pride or greed,
Timidity or wrath,
Judge falsely, he has set his foot
On hell's down-sloping path.

Therefore please confide in me and speak clearly near my ear."

The seedy rogue won their trust so fully that both drew near him. He seized them simultaneously, one with his paw and the other with his teeth. He then killed them and ate them both.

The crow who was watching everything felt deep sorrow for his friend.



Principle

Never confide in a natural adversary.

A seedy umpire is not very
Pleasing to either adversary:
Rabbit and partridge teach you that –
They died, confiding in the cat.

Story 36

The Pious Man's Goat

In a certain town lived a pious man named Friendly. He prayed to the Fire God every day. One day in the month of February, when the rains had just set in, he went to another village to beg for items to conduct his prayers. One kindly villager gave him a goat and said, "Sir, you may sell this goat and use the proceeds for your prayers to the fire." The man happily placed the goat on his shoulder and started for his home in the city.

On the road, there came three rogues who were very hungry. They spotted the plump goat on the pious man's shoulder and whispered, "Come now! If only we could eat that goat! Let's fool this man, get the goat and enjoy ourselves."

The first of them changed his clothes, emerged from the path, met Friendly and addressed him, "O pious sir, why are you doing something so unconventional and ridiculous? You are carrying an unclean animal, a dog, on your shoulder."

Friendly became very angry and said, "Are you blind? How can you mistake a goat for a dog?" "O sir," said the rogue, "do not be angry. You may proceed on your way."

When Friendly had travelled a little further, the second rogue met him and said, "Alas, holy sir, alas! Even if this dead calf was a pet, you should not place it on your shoulder."

Enraged, Friendly said, "Are you blind, man? You call a goat a calf and can't you see that this goat is not dead?" The rogue replied, "Holy sir, do not be angry. I spoke in ignorance. Please do as you will."

When Friendly had walked a little farther through the forest, the third rogue, changing his clothes accosted him and said, "Sir, this is most improper. You are carrying a donkey on your shoulder. Please drop the animal before anyone else sees you."

At this, Friendly concluded that the goat was in reality the devil himself, taking many different forms. He threw him on the ground and ran home, terrified. The three rogues caught the goat and ate it to their heart's content.



Principle

Always reflect for yourself before making a decision. Do not let the words of others cloud your own clear judgment.

Is any man uncheated by
New servants' diligence,
The praise of guests, the maiden's tears,
And roguish eloquence?

Story 37

The Self-Sacrificing Dove

A ghastly fowler plied his trade
Of horror in a forest, made
All living creatures hold their breath:
He seemed to them the god of death.

He had no comrade on the earth,
No friend, no relative by birth.
They all renounced him; he had made
Them do so by his horrid trade.

The dreadful wretches bringing death
On those who love their living breath,
With natural repulsion (like
Fierce serpents) fill before they strike.

To snare, to imprison, and to drub
He took a net, a cage, a club,
And wandering daily in the wood,
He brought all creatures harm, not good.

While he was in the wood one day,
The sky grew black with clouds straightaway;
So wild the wind, so fierce the rain,
It seemed the world dissolved in pain.

Then, as the heart within him quivered,
And every limb grew numb and shivered,
He sought where might a refuge be,
And chanced to come upon a tree.

Now as he rested, near and far
In sudden-clearing skies, each star
Shone bright; and he had wit to pray:
"O Lord, be kind to me today."

There was a dove upon the tree
Whose nest was in a cavity;
And since his wife was absent long,
He grieved for her in mournful song:

"The wind and rain was very great,
And my beloved wife is late
In coming home. When she is not
At home, home is an empty spot.

The house is not the home; but where
The wife is found, the home is there.
The home without the wife is less
To me than some wild wilderness.

Some wives their life's devotion give,
And in and for the husband live;
Whatever man has such a wife
Is heaped with blessings all his life."

From fowling-cage the female dove
Had caught the speech of grief and love;

And she was deeply gratified,
And to her husband thus replied:

"No woman earns the name of bride
Whose husband is not satisfied.
If he is happy, she may know
The gods she venerates are so.

Oh, harken heedfully, my dear;
My words are good for you to hear;
Though it should cost your life, defend
The guest who seeks in you a friend.

Here lies a fowler; as a guest
He asks for comfort at your nest.
Since cold and hunger press him sore,
Begrudge him not from honor's store.

Whoever does not give his best
To cheer the late-arriving guest
Will see his merit borne away,
And for the other's sins will pay.

Disease and poverty and pain,
With woe that prison brings amain,
Are all the fruit of one sole tree,
Our own, our past iniquity.

Abandon, therefore, thoughts of hate
Deriving from my captive state;
On virtue set your heart; and pay
This man such honor as you may."

On listening to his darling, who
Seemed virtue-woven through and through,
An unknown courage fired the dove;
He gave the fowler words of love.

"A hearty welcome, sir, to you;
What for your service may I do?
No more let anxious fancies roam,
For here with me you are at home."

In answer to his kindly words
Replied the murderer of birds:
"Well, dove, the cold is in me still;
Give me a remedy for chill."

The dove then brought a bonfire's sole
Surviving ember – one live coal,
And where a pile of dry leaves lay,
He kindled it to fire straightaway.

"Now, sir, take heart; forgetting fear,
Resuscitate your members here;
Alas! I cannot put to flight
The cravings of your appetite.

Ah, if you have not in your nest
Provision for a single guest,
Why occupy today, tomorrow
A nest that harbors naught but sorrow?

I shall destroy my body, fain
To end its living with its pain,

That nevermore I stand confesses
Powerless to aid a needy guest."

And thus he blamed himself, you see;
The greedy fowler went scot-free:
Then – 'I may yet your craving sate,
If one mere moment you will wait."

Whereat that creature free from sin,
Joy-quivering his soul within,
Walked round the fire, as it had been
His cherished home, and entered in.

When this the greedy fowler saw,
Compassion filled his soul, and awe.
He, while the dove was cooking, spoke
What from his heart a passage broke:

"None loves his soul, 'tis very plain,
Who smears it with a sinful stain.
The soul commits the sin; and late
Or soon, the soul must expiate.

My thoughts are evil; my desire
Is ever set on what is dire:
It needs but little wit to tell
I steer my course for ghastly hell.

A moral lesson let me draw
From what my savage spirit saw.
The high-souled dove, that I may eat,
Has sacrificed himself for meat.

Henceforth let all enjoyment be
An unfamiliar thing to me;
I'll share the shallow water's fate
In August; will evaporate.

Cold, wind, and heat I will embrace,
Grow thin and dirty, form and face,
Will fast by every method known,
Seek virtue, perfect and alone."

The fowler then apieces tore
Club, peg, net, cage – and what is more,
Set free the wretched female dove
Who sorrowed for her perished love.

But she, released from clutches dire,
Beheld her husband in the fire;
Whereat she gave expression so
To thoughts of horror and of woe;

"My lord! My love! What shall I do
With life that drags, apart from you?
What profit has a wretched wife,
Without a husband, of her life?

For self-esteem, respect, and pride,
The family honor paid a bride,
Authority with all the brood
Of servants, die with widowhood."

Now after this lamenting sore,
This sorrow bitter evermore,

She went where lay her heart's desire,
Walked straight into the blazing fire.

And lo! She sees her husband shine –
Oh, wonder! – in a car divine;
Her body wears a heavenly gown;
And heavenly gems hang pendent down.

While he, become a god, addressed
True consolation to her breast:
"The deed that you have done, is meet
In following your husband, sweet.

There grow upon a man alive
Some thirty million hairs and five;
So many years in heaven spend
Wives following husbands to the end."

So he joyfully took her into the chariot, embraced her and they lived happily ever after. But the fowler sank into the deepest despondency and plunged into a great forest, meditating death.

And there he saw a forest-fire
And entered it, for all desire
Was dead. His sins were burned away;
He went to heaven, there to stay.



Principle

Self-sacrifice has the power to reform the most wretched of people. Never hurt or kill one who is truly suppliant, even if he be your enemy.

Book 4

Loss of Gains

This first verse of this story runs:

Blind folly always has to pay
For giving property away
Because of blandishments and guile –
The monkey tricked the crocodile.

On the shore of the sea was a great rose-apple tree that was never without fruit. In it lived a monkey named Red-Face.

One day a crocodile named Ugly-Mug crawled out of the ocean under the tree and burrowed in the soft sand. Red-Face said, "You are my guest, sir. Please eat these rose-apples that I throw at you. You will find that they taste like nectar. You know the proverb:

By honoring the guests who come
Wayworn from some far-distant home
To share the sacrifice, you go
The noblest way that mortals know.

If guests unhonored leave your door,
And sadly sighing come no more,
Your fathers and the gods above
Turn from you and forget their love."

Thus he spoke and offered the crocodile rose-apples. The

crocodile ate them and enjoyed a long and pleasant conversation with the monkey before returning to his home. The monkey and the crocodile began resting each day in the shade of the rose-apple tree. They spent the time in cheerful conversation on various subjects and were happy. Gradually, they became good friends and enjoyed each other's company.

Each day, the crocodile went home and gave the rose-apples that he had not eaten, to his wife. One day she asked him, "My dear husband, where do you get such fruits? They taste like nectar."

"My dear," he said, "I have an awfully good friend, a monkey named Red-Face. He gives me these fruits most courteously."

She said, "If anyone eats such nectar-tasting fruit every day, his heart must have turned into nectar. So, if you value your wife, give me his heart and I will eat it. I shall never grow old or sick, but shall remain a delightful companion to you."

He objected, "In the first place, my dear, he is our adopted brother. Secondly, he gives us fruit. I cannot kill him. Please do not insist. Besides, there is a proverb:

To give us birth, we need a mother;
For second birth we need another:
And friendship's brothers seem by far
More dear than natural brothers are."

But she said, "You have never refused me before. So I am sure it is a she-monkey. You love her and spend the whole day with her. That is why you refuse to give me what I want. Your hugs are no longer passionate like before. I know some other woman has stolen your heart."

The crocodile became dejected and said to his wife:

"When I am at your feet
And at your service, sweet,
Why do you look at me
With peevish jealousy?"

Her face swam in tears when she heard him and she said:

"You love her, you deceiver;
Your wishes never leave her;
Her pretty shamming steals upon your heart.
My rivalry is vain, sir;
And so I pray abstain, sir,
From service that is only tricky art.

Besides, if you do not love her, why not kill her when I ask you to do so? And if it is really a he-monkey, why should you love him? Enough! Unless I eat his heart, I shall starve myself to death in your house."

When he saw how determined she was, he was distracted with anxiety and said, "Oh, what shall I do? How can I kill him?" With these thoughts in mind, he visited the monkey.

The monkey had missed his friend and when he saw him despondent, he said, "My friend, why haven't you been coming for so long? Why don't you speak cheerfully and why aren't you your normal witty self?"

The crocodile replied, "My friend and brother, my wife scolded me today and said, "You ungrateful wretch! You are living at your friend's expense every day and yet you give him nothing in return. You never invite him to our house. There is no atonement for ingratitude. I regard the monkey as my brother-

in-law. So please bring him home and we shall return his kindness." Now I could not come to you until she had finished her scolding. A long time passed while I was quarrelling with her about you. Please come home with me. My wife has fixed her clothes and jewels to pay you a fitting welcome. She is awaiting you impatiently."

"My friend and brother," said the monkey, "your lady is very kind. She speaks according to the proverb:

Six things are done by friends:
To take and give again;
To listen and to talk;
To dine, to entertain.

But we monkeys live in trees and your home is the water. How can I get to your home? Please bring your lady here, brother, and I shall look forward to meeting her."

The crocodile said, "My friend, our home is on a lovely sand-bank on the other side. You may climb on my back and travel comfortably with nothing to fear."

When the monkey heard this, he was delighted and said, "If that is possible, my friend, why delay? Here I am on your back."

As he sat there and saw the crocodile swimming in the bottomless ocean, the monkey was terribly frightened and said, "Go slow brother! I am getting drenched by the great waves."

When he heard this the crocodile thought, "If he fell from my back, he would be unable to move an inch, the water is so deep. He is in my power. So I will tell him my purpose and he can make his last prayers."

And so he said, "Sir, I have deceived you and brought you to meet your death at my wife's bidding. Please make your final prayers."

"Brother," said the monkey, "what harm have I done to her or to you? Why have you planned to kill me?"

"Well," replied the crocodile, "those fruits that you gave us were so sweet that my wife now longs to eat your heart. That is why I was sent to fetch you."

The quick-witted monkey said, "If that is the case, sir, why didn't you tell me on the shore? Then, I might have brought with me another heart, which is even sweeter, which I keep in a hole in the rose-apple tree. I am forlorn in this heart, at being taken to her in vain, without my sweet heart."

When he heard this, the crocodile was delighted and said, "If you feel so, my friend, give me that other heart. My wife will eat it and give up starving herself. I will now take you back to the rose-apple tree."

So he turned back and swam toward the rose-apple tree, while the monkey murmured a hundred prayers. When at last he came to the shore, he hopped and jumped farther and farther, climbed up the rose-apple tree and thought, "Hurrah! My life is saved. Today is my new birthday."

The crocodile said, "My friend and brother, give me the heart, so that my wife may eat it and stop starving herself."

The monkey laughed and said, "You fool! You traitor! How can anyone have two hearts? Go home and never return to this rose-apple tree. You know the proverb:

Whoever trusts a faithless friend
And twice in him believes,
Lays hold on death as certainly
As when a mule conceives."

Embarrassed at hearing this, the crocodile thought, "Why was I so foolish to tell him my plan? If I can possibly win his

confidence again, I should do it." He said, "My friend, she has no need of a heart. What I said was just a joke to test your sentiments. Please come to our house as a guest. Your brother's wife awaits you eagerly."

The monkey said, "Rascal! Go away this moment. I refuse to come."

At that time, another water-beast came up and said, "Friend crocodile, your wife has starved herself to death."

When the crocodile heard this, he became dejected and lamented, "Oh! What bad luck has befallen me? For the proverb says:

Where a mother does not dwell
And a wife who flatters well,
Better leave the house and roam
Forests not so wild as home.

Oh my friend, forgive all the sins I have committed toward you. I have lost her and I plan to burn myself alive."

When the monkey heard this he laughed and said, "Come on! I knew from the very beginning that you were hen-pecked. This proves it. You fool! You despair when you ought to be happy. When a wife like that dies, you should give a party. For the proverb says:

A wife forever nagging
And falling in a rage,
Is not a wife, say sages,
But premature old age."

"True enough," said the crocodile, "but what am I to do? Two calamities have befallen me. First, my home is ruined. Second, I

have lost a good friend." As the crocodile was thus wailing, another water-beast arrived and reported, "Alas! Your house has been occupied by another crocodile, a big one." The crocodile became even more despondent on hearing this. "Alas my friends!" said he. "See how unlucky I am. For:

A stranger occupies my house;
My friend is sadly vexed;
On top of that, my wife is dead.
Oh, what will happen next?

How true it is that misfortunes never come singly! Well, shall I fight him? Or shall I address him in soft conciliation and get him out of the house? Or shall I try intrigue? Or bribery? Ah, here is my monkey friend. I will ask him. For the proverb says:

Ask aid of kindly teachers, man,
The kind you ought to ask.
Their counsel leads to sure success,
Whatever be your task."

He then asked the monkey who was back on the rose-apple tree, "Oh, my friend, see how unlucky I am. For now my house is seized and held by a powerful crocodile. Tell me what I should do. Should I practise conciliation or some other method?"

The monkey said, "You ungrateful wretch! Why do you continue to pursue me? You are a fool. I will therefore not give you good advice. For one should only give advice to someone deserving of it."

The crocodile replied, "My dear friend, all that is true. Yet, please remember our friendship and give me a bit of good

advice. For there is a saying:

Disaster cannot threaten
The man of sterling worth
Who offers helpful counsel –
In heaven, or on earth.

Even though I did you a wrong, I beg you to show forgiveness by giving me good advice. You know the proverb:

And is there any sainthood
In recompensing good with good?
But worthy men go seeking still
The saints returning good for ill."

The monkey said "Well, well, my good fellow, I advise you to go and fight him for he is your equal. If you don't, he will strike his roots deep and will destroy you."

Having received this advice and resolved to die if need be the crocodile bid farewell to the monkey and returned to his house. There he battled the ruffian who had forced his way in and relying on his resolute valor, killed him. Thus he recovered his home and lived happily ever after. The proverb is indeed right:

Shun pleasant days that listless pass,
The joy that hides
In sloth. For deer can eat the grass
That fate provides.

Thus ends the story "Loss of Gains" whose first verse runs:

Blind folly always has to pay
For giving property away
Because of blandishments and guile –
The monkey tricked the crocodile.



Principle

Beware of friends who are under the influence of sly, cunning people. If caught in their trap, use quick presence of mind, wit and guile to escape.

Story 38

Handsome And Theodore

There was once a frog king named Theodore who lived in a well. He felt tormented by his relatives. One day, he made up his mind to get out of the well and succeeded by stepping on stones along the walls of the well. He wanted to take revenge on the relatives who had caused him grief. He thought:

While one brings comfort in distress,
Another jeers at pain;
By paying both as they deserve,
A man is born again.

As such thoughts passed through his mind, he spotted a black snake named Handsome crawling out of his hole. On seeing him, he thought once more, "I will invite that black snake into the well and use him to wipe out all my relatives. For the saying goes:

A sliver draws a sliver out;
Just so the wise employ
Grim foes to slaughter foes; and thus
Turn danger into joy."

Having come to this conclusion, he went to the mouth of the hole and called, "Come out! Come out, Handsome! Come out!" But when the snake heard this, he thought, "This is not a snake's voice. I am unsure of who this is. I shall not emerge

from my hole until I ascertain the nature of this person. For the proverb says:

Until you have full information
Of prowess, character, and station,
To no man let your trust be given –
Such is the current law in heaven.

Perhaps it is some trickster who is calling out to me to put me in a cage. Or it could be a man who bears some grudge and wants to befriend me to help me carry out his deeds.

So he said, "Who are you?" Theodore replied, "I am a frog king named Theodore and I have come to make friends with you."

The snake retorted, "Why, this is incredible. Does grass make friends with fire? You know the proverb:

You do not, even in a dream,
Approach the king of foe
Who kills at sight. What can you mean?
Why should you babble so?"

To this Theodore said, "You are quite right, sir. You are my born enemy. Yet I come to you because I have been insulted by my relatives. You know well:

When all your property is gone
And life itself at stake –
To save that life and property
You grovel to a snake."

The snake said, "Well, who insulted you?" The frog answered, "My relatives." "But where is your home?" asked the snake.

"My home is in a well," said the frog. "But I cannot get into a well," said the snake. "Besides, even if I got in, where will I reside while I am inside? Go away!"

Theodore replied, "No sir, Come with me. I will show you an easy way into the well. And inside there is a very attractive hole at water-level. There you can reside and it will be child's play for you to finish off my relatives."

The snake reflected, "I am getting old. I only manage to catch a mouse or two here and there. And sometimes I am unable to catch anything. The proverb is indeed right:

When strength is ebbing, dying
When friends are gone, and wife,
The prudent should be trying
A carpet-slippery life."

He said to Theodore, "Well, if you really mean this, lead the way. We shall go together." "Friend Handsome," said Theodore, "I will take you there by an easy route and show you the resting place. But you must spare my family. You must only eat the ones that I point out to you."

"My dear fellow," said the snake, "you and I are now friends. Have no fear. I will do nothing that is against your wishes."

He then emerged from his hole, hugged the frog and set out with him. They came to the edge of the well and the snake went in with the frog by jumping on stones along the wall. Theodore then settled the snake in the hole and showed him all the relatives.

Slowly the snake ate up all the relatives. He then started eating some of Theodore's friends as well, without the latter's knowledge. One day he addressed Theodore, "My dear fellow, I have disposed of your enemies. Please give me something to eat, for you brought me here."

"But my dear friend," said Theodore, "you have done what I expected of you. Please return to your home outside the well by stepping on the stones."

"Friend Theodore," said Handsome, "you make a serious mistake. How can I go home? My hole must now be occupied by strangers since I haven't been there for so long. I shall stay here and you must give me a frog at a time even it is from your own family. It you refuse, I shall myself set out and eat every one of you."

Theodore was disturbed by these words and reflected, "Oh, what have I brought myself to? I am helpless at this point. Yes, the proverb is right:

Whoever fraternizes with
Too vigorous a foe,
Is eating poison, and will soon
Perceive it to be so.

It is better for me to offer him one frog a day even if it must be a friend. For they say:

'Tis wise, when all is threatened,
To give a half, and guard
The other half to win one's ends;
For total loss is hard.

So he made up his mind and assigned a frog a day as food for the snake. The snake ate them one after the other, also swallowing some on the sly, without Theodore's knowledge. Ah, it is so true:

As muddied garments dirty
All that you sit upon,

So, when one virtue tumbles,
The rest are quickly gone.

One day, while eating frogs, he ate a frog named Theodosius, the son of Theodore. Theodore caught him in the act and wailed with piercing shrillness. His wife said:

'Why so shrill? You were still
While you worked your cruel will.
Hope has fled with your dead;
Who will save your hapless head?

So think of a plan to make an escape immediately. Or devise a scheme to kill him."

In course of time the frogs were all killed and only Theodore remained. Handsome said to him, "My dear Theodore, I am hungry and all the frogs are dead. Please give me something to eat for you were the one who brought me here."

Theodore said, "My friend, feel no anxiety on that account. I am a person of my word. If you permit me to leave, I shall persuade frogs in other wells and bring them all here."

The snake said, "You are like a brother to me. If you bring me all the other frogs, you will be like my father."

So the frog planned his escape and left the well while Handsome waited there, impatient for him to return. After a long time Handsome spoke to a lizard that lived in another hole in the same well and said, "My dear madam, please do me a favor. Since Theodore is an old friend of yours, please go and find him and pass on this message to him: Tell him to return quickly, alone if need be, if the other frogs refuse to come. I cannot live here without him. And tell him that if I should hurt him, he would obtain all the merit that I have acquired in a lifetime."

The lizard did as he was told, quickly hunted Theodore out and said, "My dear sir, your friend Handsome is waiting eagerly for you to return. Please hurry back. He pledges you all the merit he has acquired in this lifetime, should he hurt you. So please drop all anxious thoughts and return home."

But Theodore said:

The hungry man at nothing sticks;
The poor man has his heartless tricks.
Tell Handsome, miss, that Theodore
Will see him in the well no more.

And he sent her back.



Principle

Hunger or poverty can rob one of all sense of right and wrong. It is unwise to fraternize with the foe.

Story 39

The Pert Hen-Sparrow

In a certain wood lived a sparrow and his wife who had built their nest on the branch of a tree. One day, in the month of February, a monkey took shelter under the tree; for he had been caught in a hail-storm and his body shivered in the cold. Since his teeth were chattering and his hands and feet were tightly clenched, the hen-sparrow said to him compassionately:

With hands and feet of human plan,
Almost you seem to be a man.
So, if you find the weather cool,
Why not construct a house, you fool?

When the monkey heard this, he reflected: "Well, well, some people fancy themselves. Here is this silly hen-sparrow who thinks so highly of her own judgment. The saying is indeed correct:

Of self-conceit all creatures show
An adequate supply:
The plover lies with claws upstretched
To prop the falling sky."

He then asked her to shut up and mind her business. But she continued to ply him with excellent advice concerning the construction of a house even after he had asked her to stop disturbing him. So he climbed the tree and destroyed her nest,

breaking it to bits.



Principle

Offer advice only when asked and only to those deserving of it.

Give counsel only when it fits
To such as seek the best.
The foolish monkey broke to bits
The sparrow's cozy nest.

Story 40

Flop-Ear and Dusty

There was once a lion named Fierce-Mane who lived in a part of a forest. He had a jackal for a servant, a faithful drudge named Dusty.

One day the lion fought with an elephant and got so wounded that he was unable to move. Since the master could not stir, Dusty grew feeble for he depended on the lion for his sustenance. He said to the lion, "O King, this hunger is killing me. When I am so weak, how can I serve you?" "My good Dusty," said the lion, "hunt out some animal that I can kill even in my present debilitated state."

So the jackal went hunting. Dragging himself slowly to a nearby village, he spotted a donkey named Flop-Ear who was eating thin, prickly grass that grew near the village temple. He drew near and said, "Uncle, please accept my respects. It has been a while since we met. You have grown so weak!"

Flop-Ear replied, "What shall I do, dear nephew? My owner, the laundryman is merciless and tortures me by placing burdensome loads on my back. He hardly gives me fodder to eat. All I survive on, is this prickly grass."

"Well uncle," said the jackal, "I know a wonderful spot by the river. It is covered with rich grass. Come there and live with me. I shall grant you the company of my witty conversation."

"That's very gracious of you, dear nephew," answered Flop-Ear. "But village beasts are easily killed by forest animals. So I have no attraction for your charming spot."

"No, no," said the jackal. "I rule over that spot and no stranger dares to enter there. Besides, there are three unmarried she-donkeys who are also tormented by laundrymen, just like you. They are healthy, young and frisky. They said to me, 'Uncle dear, please bring us a proper husband from some village.' That is why I came to fetch you."

When he heard the jackal's words, Flop-Ear felt his limbs quiver with love and he said, "In that case, my dear sir, please lead the way. Let's hurry there." The poet is obviously right when he says:

You are our only nectar; you,
O woman, are our poison, too.
For union with you is the breath
Of life; and absence from you, death.

So the poor creature accompanied the jackal into the lion's presence. But the lion was dreadfully foolish. When he saw the donkey within range of his spring, he was so overjoyed that he jumped over him and landed on the other side. The donkey wondered, "What, oh, what can this be?" He thought a thunderbolt had struck him. Yet, for fate was kind to him, he escaped unhurt. When he looked back, he saw the cruel creature with bloodshot eyes and beat a hasty, terrified retreat to his own residence.

The jackal then said to the lion, "Well, what does this mean? I witnessed your act of heroism." The lion was dumbfounded and said, "But I didn't have time to prepare for the spring. What could I do? I am weak and have lost my spring."

The jackal said, " Practise better next time. I am going to bring him to you again." "My dear fellow," said the lion, "he saw me face to face and escaped. How can he be enticed to come here again? Bring me some other animal."

The jackal replied, "Why should you worry about that? I know exactly how to bring him back here." The jackal followed the donkey's tracks and found him grazing in the old place.

When he saw the jackal, the donkey said, "Well, nephew, what a place to take me to! I was lucky to escape alive. What was that horrible creature?"

The jackal laughed and said, "Uncle, that was a she-donkey. She was unspeakably lovesick and seeing you, she rose passionately to embrace you. But you were shy and ran away. As you disappeared, she stretched out her hand to keep you there. That is all that transpired. So come back. She has resolved to starve to death for your sake and says, 'If Flop-Ear does not marry me, I will plunge into fire or water or will eat poison. I cannot bear to be separated from him.' So have mercy on her and please return. If not, you shall anger the god of love by breaking her heart."

Persuaded by this reasoning, the foolish donkey started off with him again. The proverb is indeed right:

Men, knowing better, oft commit
A shabby deed – so strong is fate.

Thereupon the donkey came again into the presence of the lion and was killed immediately, for the lion had practised his spring well. Then the lion set the jackal on guard and went to the river to bathe. The greedy jackal, unable to wait, ate the donkey's ears and heart. When the lion returned from his bath, he found the donkey minus ears and heart. He was filled with wrath and said to the jackal, "You scoundrel! What unseemly deed have you committed?"

"O King," said the jackal respectfully, "please do not speak so. This creature was born without ears and heart. Otherwise, how could he have returned to this spot, having once been attacked? Why, this merits poetry:

He came, he saw, he fled
From your appearance dread,
Returned, forgot his fears –
The fool lacked heart and ears."

The lion was convinced of the jackal's argument and ate his own share quietly, without suspicion.



Principle

The foolish fall into traps even when they are in full sight of lurking danger. No one can save the hardened fool. On the other hand sharp wit and presence of mind can save one in the toughest moments.

Story 41

How Supersmart Ate the Elephant

There was once a jackal named Supersmart who lived in a part of a forest. One day he came across an elephant that had died a natural death in the forest. But the hide was too tough for the jackal to be able to tear into it.

At that moment, a lion came to the spot. Spying him, the jackal was quick to show his respect. He bowed before him and said, "My lord and king, I am guarding this elephant for you. Please eat it." The lion replied, "My good fellow, under no circumstances do I eat what another has killed. I shall leave this elephant for you." The jackal was thrilled.

When the lion was gone, a tiger arrived. When he saw the tiger, the jackal thought, "Well, I sent one rascal packing by paying obeisance. Now, how shall I get rid of this one? He is obviously a hero and I must therefore handle him by intrigue. For there is a saying:

Where bribes and flattery would fail,
Intrigue is certain to avail.

And indeed all creatures are held in bondage by intrigue that pierces the heart. As the saying goes:

Even a pearl, so smoothly hard and round,
Is fastened by a thread and safely bound,
After a way to pierce its heart is found."

So he approached the tiger, stiffened his neck and spoke in an agitated tone, "Uncle, how could you venture into the jaws of death? This elephant was killed by a lion who put me on guard while he went to bathe. As he left, he gave me my orders, 'if any tiger comes this way, creep up and tell me. I am determined to clear this forest of tigers because once, when I had killed an elephant, a tiger helped himself while my back was turned and all I had for myself was the leftovers.' From that day I have sworn not to spare any tiger in this forest."

On hearing this, the tiger was terrified and said, "My dear nephew, please help me here. Please do not give him any word of your having seen me." With that he ran away.

When the tiger left, a leopard appeared. The jackal thought, "Here comes Spot. He has powerful teeth. I will use him to cut into this elephant hide." So he said to the leopard, "Well, nephew, where have you been all this while? And you seem so hungry. Here lies an elephant, killed by a lion who appointed me its guardian. If you can cut through this hide before the lion returns, you may enjoy a good meal of it."

"No, uncle," said the leopard, "this meat does not suit my stomach. So I will be off." "Don't be timid," said the jackal. "Pluck up courage and eat. I will warn you of his return as soon as I spot him." The leopard did as suggested and as soon as the jackal saw that the hide had been cut through, he called out, "Quick, nephew, quick! Here comes the lion." Hearing this, the leopard also vanished.

While the jackal was eating meat through the opening cut by the leopard, another jackal entered the scene. Supersmart estimated that he was his equal, whose prowess he knew accurately. He recited the stanza:

Sway patrons with obeisance;
In heroes raise a doubt;
Fling petty bribes to flunkeys;
With equals, fight it out.

He made a dash at him and tore him apart. He then enjoyed the elephant meat for a long time.



Principle

Treat rivals in accordance with their strength; employing different tactics to suit their strength

Story 42

The Jackal Who Killed No Elephants

In a certain part of a forest lived a lion and his wife. One day the lioness gave birth to twins. The lion hunted for his family and brought the lioness food every day.

One day, the lion was unable to find anything to kill. As the sun set, he trotted back home, disappointed. On the way, he spotted a baby jackal on the trail. He took pity on the poor baby, held it between his teeth and carefully carried it home. He handed the live baby to the lioness.

The lioness said, "Have you brought us any food dear?" He answered, "My dear, I found nothing except this jackal cub. But I didn't feel like killing him, for I thought, 'He is a creature much like us and a baby at that.' You know the proverb:

Never strike a hermit mild,
Woman, clergyman, or child:
Give your life, if needs you must –
Do not falsify their trust.

But if you feel like eating him, please do so. I will bring something else in the morning."

"Sweetheart," said she, "you did not kill him because you thought, 'He is a baby.' How then can I destroy him just to satisfy my hunger? The scripture says:

No man may plead the death-god's might
For doing wrong, or shirking right.

So he shall be my third son."

She then gave him her own milk and the baby jackal slowly gained weight. The three cubs spent their infancy together, engaging in the same pastimes and not recognizing any difference in parentage.

One day a white elephant came wandering into the forest. The two lion-cubs, when they saw him, surged forward, eager to kill him. But the jackal-cub said, "Brothers, that is an elephant, an enemy. Don't go near him." He then ran home. When the other two saw their elder brother run away in fear, they felt their courage wane. The well-known proverb is right:

One bold and plucky fighter
Will give an army pluck:
One broken, routed blighter
Diffuses evil luck.

This is the very reason why
Kings look for sturdy fighters,
Heroic, dauntless, stone-wall men,
And shun the cowardly blighters.

The twin brothers then went home and humorously told their parents how their elder brother had behaved. "Why, you know," they said, "the minute he saw the elephant, he couldn't even run away quickly enough."

When the jackal heard this, his heart was filled with seething anger. His eyes grew red and he spoke harsh words to the twins.

The lioness took him aside and admonished him: "You must

never, never speak so, my dear. They are your brothers." Her patient pleading only filled him with greater anger and he yelled back at her, "Do you think I am inferior to them in courage, beauty or skill? What right do they have to ridicule me? I am going to kill them."

When she heard this outburst, the lioness laughed quietly for she did not wish for him to die and said:

"Handsome you are, and valorous;
You have a scholar's brain:
But in your family, my boy,
No elephants are slain.

Now listen carefully, my dear. Your mother was a jackal and she abandoned you. I took pity on you and raised you on my milk. Now while my twins are still young and do not recognize that you are a jackal, hurry away and join your own people. If not, the twins will eventually fight you and you will be no match for them." When the jackal heard this, he was stricken with terror and quietly walked away to join his own people.



Principle

Acquiring traits and qualifications can only take us so far. These are no match to one with innate flair and natural, inborn talent. It is hard to mask one's true nature and predispositions.

Story 43

The Ass In The Tiger Skin

There was once a laundryman named Clean-Cloth who lived in a certain town. He had a single donkey who had grown very feeble from not being fed enough fodder.

As the laundryman wandered in the forest, he saw a dead tiger and he thought, "Ah, this is a piece of luck for me. I will put this tiger-skin on the donkey and let him graze in the barley fields at night. The farmers will think he is a tiger and will not drive him away."

This worked well and the donkey ate barley to his heart's content. At dawn the laundryman took him back to the barn. As time passed, the donkey grew healthy and plump.

One day the donkey heard the bray of a she-donkey in the distance. At this mere sound, he spontaneously began to bray himself. The farmers perceived that he was a donkey in disguise and killed him with blows using clubs and stones.



Principle

Untimely speech can ruin a well-devised plan. Stupid people who rise to the top by sheer luck, should be especially careful in word and deed.

The parrots and the grackle birds
Are caged because they utter words:
The stupid herons go scot-free-
For silence is a master-key.

Story 44

The Potter Militant

There once lived a potter in a certain village. One day he ran carelessly into the jagged edge of a broken pot and tumbled. The jagged edge tore his forehead and he struggled to his feet, blood streaming over his body. As the wound was treated poorly, a terrible scar was left on the potter's forehead.

After some time, famine struck his village. So the potter left for another country and became a life-guard there.

The king noticed the horrible scar on his brow and thought, "This man must be a great hero. He has taken such a great wound on his brow." So he bestowed honors and gifts on him and treated him graciously. The other princes grew jealous of him.

One day, there was a review of some members of the armed forces. The elephants, horses and men were inspected. At the time the king asked the potter, "O Prince, what's your name? What family do you hail from? In which battle did you incur this wound?"

"Your Majesty," he replied, "I am a potter by birth and my name is Fight-Firm. This is not a wound from any battle. I was unsteady from drinking too much alcohol one day and tumbled over a row of broken pots. The wound from the tear was not treated properly and hence this terrible looking scar on my brow."

The king reflected, "Good heavens! I took this potter to be a prince. He must be punished."

To this the potter said, "Your Majesty, please do not treat me like this. Give me a chance and you will see my valor in battle." "No, my friend," said the king, "you may possess all the virtues necessary to fight in battle but you lack the necessary training and background. It is best that you decamp before everyone else learns that you a potter. If you stay on, you will be hooted and killed."

Hearing this, the potter ran away.



Principle

Forgetting one's advantage in a situation and blurting out heedlessly leads to ruin.

The heedless trickster who forgets
His own advantage, and who lets
The truth slip out, like Fight-Firm, he
Is sure to lose his victory.

Story 45

The Dog Who Went Abroad

There was once a dog named Spot in a certain town that was struck by famine. As all sources of food disappeared, dogs and other animals began to lose their homes. Spot was very hungry and left for another country.

In a city of that country he found a housewife who was careless in her work. So he entered her house everyday and ate his fill from all that he could find there. But as he left the house, other dogs attacked him and tore at his limbs.

Then he thought, "Better one's native land where one lives in peace even during times of famine and where one is not attacked. I shall return to my own city." Having thus reasoned things through, he returned to his home town.

His relatives asked him questions as it usually happens with people returning from foreign lands, "Come now, tell us all about it. What is the country like? How do the people behave? What do they eat? What are their habits?"

And he replied: "Why speak of the country?

The food is very good to eat
And does not lack variety;
While easy-going women meet
You in the town's society:
But kinsmen in that foreign street
Are wanting in sobriety."



Principle

There is no greater safety and comfort than that afforded by one's own native home.

Book 5

Ill-considered Action

Stories from Book 5

Story 46

The Lion Makers

In a certain town there lived four good friends. Three of them were great scholars but lacked common sense. The fourth found scholarship unappealing but was blessed with good sense.

One day they met for consultation. "What is the use of our attainments," said they, "if we do not travel, win the favor of kings and acquire money? Let us all travel."

The eldest of them said, "The three of us are fit to travel and seek our fortune. But the fourth is a dullard who possesses no scholarship but only sense. Nobody gains the favor of kings through simple sense devoid of scholarship. Let us therefore not share our earnings with him. Let him return home."

And the second said, "My intelligent friend, you lack scholarship. Please go home." But the third said, "No, no. This is no way to behave. We have all played together since we were little boys. Come along, dear friend. You shall have a share of the money we earn."

The other two finally agreed and the four friends continued their journey. Presently in a forest, they found the bones of a dead lion. One of them said, "Here's a good opportunity to test the ripeness of our scholarship. Here lies the dead body of

some kind of a creature. Let us bring it to life by means of all the scholarship that we have acquired over the years."

The first said, "I know how to assemble all the bones and form the skeleton." The second said, "I can supply skin, flesh and blood." The third said, "I can give it life."

So the first assembled the skeleton, the second provided skin, flesh and blood. The third was ready to give the breath of life to the creature when the man of sense called out, "This is a lion. If you bring him to life, he will kill every one of us."

"You simpleton!" said the other, "stay away. You know nothing of these matters." "In that case," came the reply, "wait a moment, while I climb this tree."

When this was done, the lion was brought to life. He rose and killed all three in an instant. After he left, the man of sense climbed down the tree and went home, bemoaning the fate of his friends.



Principle

Mere scholarship without sense and wisdom is worthless.

Story 47

The Loyal Mongoose

There once lived a pious man named Godly in a certain town. His wife and he had one son. They also raised a baby mongoose that they had once found abandoned, outside their home. The wife raised the mongoose lovingly but she always bore some distrust towards him. She thought, "A mongoose is after all a nasty creature. He could hurt my boy."

One day she tucked her son into bed, took a water jar and told her husband, "I am going to fetch water. You must protect our boy from the mongoose." When she was gone, Godly also left the house on some errand.

While he was gone, a black snake crept out of its hole and crawled toward the baby's cradle. The mongoose, sensing him to be a natural enemy and fearing for the life of his dear baby brother, pounced on the vicious serpent, got into a battle with him, tore him to bits and tossed the pieces far and wide. Delighted with his heroic act, he ran, blood trickling from his mouth, to meet the mother. He wished to show her what he had accomplished.

When the mother saw him coming and saw the blood on his body and the excitement on his face, she assumed that the villain must have eaten her baby boy. Without thinking twice, she dropped the water jar on him in anger. That killed the mongoose instantaneously. She left him there and ran inside, only to find her baby safe and sound and the great black snake torn to bits near the cradle. Overwhelmed with sorrow, she wept uncontrollably.

When Godly returned, he saw his wife crying bitterly. She explained everything to him.

At that Godly said:

Deeds ill-known, ill-recognized,
Ill-accomplished, ill-advised –
Thought of these let no man harbor.
Let the well-advised be done;
Ill-advised leave unbegun.



Principle

Think well before you act. Avoid rash action.

Story 48

Hundred-Wit, Thousand-Wit and Single-Wit

In a certain pond there lived two fishes named Hundred-Wit and Thousand-Wit. A frog named Single-Wit befriended them. They led a happy life together, enjoying pleasant conversation and games in the water.

One day at sunset, as they were engaged in witty conversation, some fishermen came to the pond with their nets. One of them remarked, "Look! This pond appears to contain plenty of fish and the water seems shallow. Let's return at dawn." So saying, they went home.

To the three friends, these words were as dreadful as the fall of a thunderbolt. They consulted each other. The frog spoke first, "My dear friends, what should we do now, flee or stick it out?"

Thousand-Wit laughed and said, "My good friend, do not let mere words frighten you. I am sure they will not return in the morning. And even if they do, I shall save all three of us by using my wit for I know of many tricks in the water." Hundred-Wit added, "Yes, Thousand-Wit is quite right. For:

Where wind is checked, and light of day,
The wise man's wit soon finds a way.

One cannot, on mere account of a few words, abandon his birthplace, the home of his ancestors. You must not go away. I shall save you by virtue of my wit."

"Well," said the frog, "I have only a single wit and that tells me to flee. My wife and I shall depart for some other body of water this very night." And he left for another pond.

At dawn the next day the fish-catchers came along. They cast their nets on the pond, agents of Death that they were. All the fishes, turtles, crabs, frogs and other water creatures were captured. Hundred-Wit and Thousand-Wit also fell into a net and were killed though they tried various fancy tricks to save themselves.

The fishermen gleefully carried them all home. One of them carried Hundred-Wit, who was heavy, on his head. Another carried Thousand-Wit, tied to a cord. Then the frog, safe in another pond, said to his wife, "Look dear. Look!

While Hundred-Wit is on a head,
While Thousand-Wit hangs limp and dead,
Your humble Single-Wit, my dear,
Is paddling in the water clear."



Principle

The course of fate cannot be reversed. Creatures of very great sense perish if stricken by fate, while those of meager intelligence, if protected by fate, live happily.

Story 49

The Unforgiving Monkey

In a certain city was a king named Moon who retained some monkeys in his palace for his son's amusement. They were fed well and kept happy for the prince. The king also maintained a herd of rams for his son. One of them was a pest; he entered the kitchen at odd hours and swallowed everything in sight. The cooks would hit him with sticks and ladles but he never learned.

When the chief of monkeys observed this, he reflected, "Dear me! If the ram continues to quarrel with the cooks, it will spell destruction for all the monkeys. The ram keeps getting hit by the cooks. What if they find nothing else some day and beat him with a firebrand? The ram would instantaneously catch fire. If he then runs into the stable nearby, all the horses there will be scorched. The veterinarian would prescribe monkey fat to relieve the horses of their burns. And that would spell death for all of us."

Having reached this conclusion, he assembled all the monkeys and said:

"A quarrel of the ram and cooks
Has lately come about;
It threatens every monkey life
Without a shade of doubt.

Because, if senseless quarrels rend
A house from day to day,
The folk who wish to keep alive
Had better move away.
For quarrels end a happy home;

And slander, friendship's story;
While evil kings their kingdoms end;
And meanness, manly glory.

Let us therefore leave the house and take to the woods before we are all killed."

But the conceited monkeys laughed at his warning and said, "Oho! You are old and are losing your mind. Your words prove it. We have no intention of giving up the delicacies that the prince feeds us with his own hand. Life in the forest is dreadful."

The monkey chief grimaced and said, "Come on! You are fools. You are unable to think matters through. The state of affairs is sweet now but could turn into poison later. In any case, I am off to the forest. As the proverb says:

Blest are they who do not see
Death upon the family,
Friend in trouble, stolen wife,
Ruin of the nation's life."

With these words the chief left them all behind and departed for the forest.

One day after he had left, the ram entered the kitchen. Finding nothing else handy, the cook picked a blazing firebrand and hit him. With half his body blazing, he rushed into the stable nearby. There he rolled on the ground and the entire stable,

made of thatch, was up in flames. Of the horses tethered there, some died and some were burned.

In this state of affairs, the saddened king summoned his veterinary surgeons and said, "Prescribe some relief for my horses." Recalling what they had learned in school, they said, "O King, monkey-fat is the recommended prescription to free the horses from the pain of burns. Please bring us monkey-fat in large quantities; otherwise the horses will perish."

The king immediately ordered the slaughter of the monkeys. They were all killed.

The monkey chief who could not bear to see this outrage perpetrated on his kith and kin, nevertheless heard of what had transpired, through word of mouth. As the proverb says:

If foes commit an outrage on
A house, and one forgives –
Be it from fear or greed – he is
The meanest man that lives.

As the elderly monkey wandered about thirsty, he came to a lake full of beautiful lotuses. As he observed closely, he noticed footprints leading into the lake but none coming out. Thereupon he reflected, "There must be some vicious beast that lives in this water. I will stay at a distance and drink through a hollow lotus-stalk."

When he had done so, there emerged from the water a man-eating fiend with a pearl necklace on his neck. He said, "Sir, I eat everyone who enters the water. You are indeed shrewd to think of this unique way to drink water. I have taken a liking to you. Name your heart's desire."

"Sir," said the monkey, "how many can you eat?" The fiend replied, "I can eat hundreds and thousands of creatures if they enter the water. But outside water, even a jackal can overpower me."

"And I," said the monkey, "I am dying to take revenge on a king. If you give me your pearl necklace, I will arouse his greed somehow and will make that king enter this lake along with all his followers." And the fiend handed over the pearl necklace to the monkey chief.

The people of the kingdom then began spotting the monkey roaming over trees and palace roofs with a pearl necklace adorning his throat and they asked him, "Well, chief, where were you all this while? Where did you get a pearl necklace like this? Its beauty is dazzling."

The monkey answered, "In a quiet spot in the forest is a well-hidden lake, a creation of the god of wealth himself. Through his grace, if anyone bathes there at sunrise on a Sunday, he emerges with a pearl necklace on his neck."

Word reached the king and he summoned the monkey and asked him, "Is this true chief?" "O King," said the monkey, "the matchless pearl necklace around my neck is visible proof of this. If you send someone with me, I can show him this miracle first-hand."

On hearing this, the king said, "In light of these facts, I will come myself with my followers, so that we may acquire several such necklaces." "O King," said the monkey, "that's a brilliant idea."

So the king and his followers started for the lake immediately, greedy to acquire the pearl necklaces. The king gave the monkey a tight hug and honored him all along the way. There is wisdom in the saying:

The educated and the rich,
Befooled by greed,
Plunge into wickedness, then feel
The pinch of need.

The hair grows old with aging years;
The teeth grow old, the eyes and ears.
But while the aging seasons speed,
One thing is young forever – greed.

At dawn they reached the lake and the monkey said to the king, "O King, fulfillment comes to those who enter at sunrise. Please inform all your attendants; so they may all enter at the same moment. You must enter with me, for I will show you the exact spot where I entered before." So all the attendants entered first and were eaten by the fiend.

As they waited the king said to the monkey, "Well, chief, why do my attendants linger under water?" And the monkey hurriedly climbed a tree before saying to the king, "You villainous king, your attendants have been eaten by a fiend who lives in the water. I have finally avenged the horror that you perpetrated on my family. Leave now. I prevented you from entering the lake since you are the king. So just as you plotted the death of my kith and kin, I destroyed your followers."

The king then returned to his palace, grief-stricken. When the king had gone, the fiend, fully satisfied, emerged from the water and gleefully recited the verse:

Very good, my monkey-o!
You won a friend and killed a foe,
And kept the pearls without a flaw,
By sucking water through a straw.



Principle

Greedy people who do not carefully analyze the consequences of their deeds are sure to inflict suffering upon themselves.

Story 50

The Musical Donkey

In a certain town was a donkey named Prig. In the daytime he carried laundry packages but was at liberty to wander anywhere at night. One night while wandering in the fields he met a jackal and they became friends. They ate whatever they found in the fields at night and parted ways at dawn.

One night the proud donkey, while eating cucumbers in the fields, said to the jackal, "See, nephew! The night is lovely. I shall compose a song. What sentiment would you like my song to express?" "Don't, dear friend," said the jackal. "It might put us in trouble, for people might find out that we are thieves roaming these fields. Thieves and lovers should stay silent. As the proverb says:

No sleepyhead should pilfer fur,
No invalid, rich provender,
No sneezer should become a thief –
Unless they wish to come to grief.

Besides, your voice isn't that great. It is also quite loud, like a blast from a conch shell. The farmers will hear you from afar and fetter or kill you. It is better that you keep quiet and eat."

"Come, come!" said the donkey. "Your remarks prove that you lack taste in music."

"That is true," said the jackal. "But your bray is harsh to the ear and everyone can recognize that. Why do a thing that is bound

to put you in trouble?" "O Fool!" answered the donkey. Don't you know:

On earth is nothing nobler found,
Nor yet in heaven, than vocal song;
The singing Devil soothes the Lord,
When quivering strings the sound prolong.

How can you think I lack taste? You are jealous of my voice."

"Very well," said the jackal, "I will hide behind the hedges to protect myself. You may sing to your heart's content."

The donkey then lifted his neck and began to utter sounds. The farmers, hearing the bray of a donkey, clenched their teeth in anger, grabbed their cudgels and beat him so hard that he fell to the ground.



Principle

Stubbornness in recognizing one's limitations by oneself or through friends leads to one's downfall.

Story 51

Slow, the Weaver

In a certain town lived a weaver named Slow. One day all the pegs in his loom broke. So he took an axe and in his search for wood, came to the seashore. There he found a large tree and thought, "This seems like a good-sized tree. If I cut it down, I can make many weaving tools from the wood." He then lifted his axe and struck the tree.

There was a fairy in the tree who spoke up, "My friend, this tree is my home. Please spare it. I live here in complete happiness."

"But, sir," said the weaver, "what am I to do? Since I have lost the apparatus for my loom, my family is starving. So please move to another tree quickly. I must cut this one down."

"Sir," said the fairy, "I have taken a liking to you. Ask for anything else but please spare this tree."

"In that case," said the weaver, "I shall consult with my friend and wife and return to you." The fairy consented and the weaver went home. On entering the town, he met his friend the barber and said, "My friend, I have won the favor of a fairy. Tell me, what shall I ask of her."

The barber replied, "My dear fellow, ask for a kingdom. You can be king and I will be your prime minister. And we shall both enjoy the delights of this world to our heart's content."

"Quite so, my friend," replied the weaver. "But let me ask my wife also." "Don't," said the barber. "It is a mistake to consult women. As the saying goes:

Give a woman food and dresses
(Chiefly when her trouble presses);
Give her gems and all things nice;
Do not ask for her advice.

Only when he does not hear
Woman's whisper in his ear,
May a man a leader be,
Keeping due humility."

The weaver rejoined, "You may be right but I shall ask her. She is a good wife."

So he made haste and said to his wife, "My dear wife, we have won the favor of a fairy today. He offers anything we want. My friend, the barber thinks we should ask for a kingdom. What do you say?"

"Dear husband," said she, "barbers have no sense. Do not take his advice. Owning a kingdom is troublesome. It means worry about peace, war, change of base, entrenchment, alliance, duplicity and other matters. It never gives true happiness and satisfaction. And even worse,

His very sons and brothers wish
The slaughter of a king;
As this is kingship's nature, who
Would not reject the thing?"

"Yes," said the weaver, "you are right. So what shall we ask for then?" And she replied, "You now produce one piece of cloth a day on your loom. That meets all our expenses. So ask for another pair of arms and an extra head so that you may simultaneously produce two pieces of cloth. We could use the money from the second piece of cloth for our enjoyment."

On hearing this, he was delighted and said, "Splendid idea my faithful wife! I love your suggestion."

So the weaver went to the fairy and requested thus, "Sir, please give me a second pair of arms and an extra head." Even as he spoke, he became two-headed and four-armed.

As he returned home, his heart filled with delight, people thought he was a monster and drove him from the town.



Principle

Only seek advice from good friends who are also wise.

Story 52

The Poor Man's Dream

In a certain town lived a poor man named Seedy who begged for barley every day. He ate a portion of what he received and filled a jar with the remainder. He hung this jar on a peg above his cot. One day, as he lay on his cot, his gaze fell on the jar and he fell into a hypnotic reverie.

"Well, here is a jar full of barley," he thought. "If famine strikes, I could make a hundred rupees from selling it. I shall buy two she-goats with that money. Every six months they will bear two more she-goats. I will then buy cows. When the cows produce calves, I will sell the calves. I shall then buy buffaloes and then horses. By selling the horses, I will buy gold. With the gold, I will buy a large house. Someone will then offer me their daughter in marriage. I shall marry a lovely woman and become the father of a beautiful son whom I will name Moon-Lord. I will spend my spare time on the stable roof, reading books. Moon-Lord will see me there and jump from his mother's lap in his eagerness to reach me. He will then get too near the horses and I will get angry and tell my wife to take him away. But she will be busy with her chores and will pay no attention to what I say. Then I will get up and kick her."

Sunk in this hypnotic dream, he gave such a strong kick that his leg hit the jar and smashed it. The barley inside spilled all over him.



Principle

It is pointless to indulge in hopes that are too extravagant and implausible.

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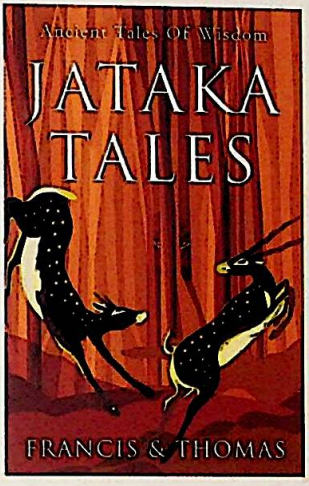
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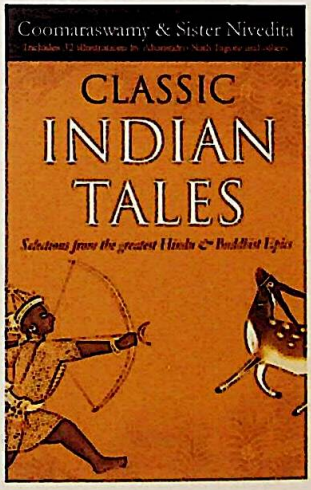
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